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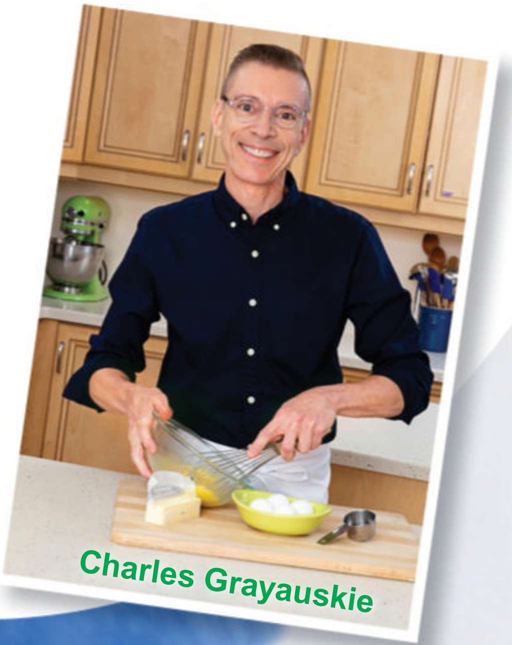
SLOW COOKER

Welcome to our slow-cooker spectacular!

There's simply nothing better than coming home to the comforting aroma of a warm meal that's been simmering for hours. And while the slow cooker is a favorite for making almost-effortless soups and stews, you'd be surprised at the variety of dishes it can make—and we've got them all here for you! Take your pick from classics like hearty beef stew and French onion soup to delicious new ideas for no-fuss breakfasts, crowd-pleasing appetizers and even desserts like a creamy cheesecake (the best our testers have ever tasted!). With easy step-by-step recipes from *Woman's World* kitchen pros Susan Chiusano and Charles Grayauskie, plus helpful tips and tricks from Emily Boyette, this will surely become your go-to slow-cooker guide. Now let's get cooking!

Susan Chiusano



Charles Grayauskie

Are Media: Michael Keel (2); Makeup/Grooming: Joanie James (2)

Easy slow-cooker success secrets

Our clever tips and handy tricks will help you get the most out of this kitchen dynamo

Layer trick for even cooking

It's easy to throw all your ingredients into the slow cooker at once, but for delicious meals every time, pro chefs recommend *layering* ingredients to ensure they're all perfectly cooked. The trick: Start by placing root vegetables cut into same-size pieces in the bottom, followed by browned meat, then potatoes and softer veggies last. Since the hottest part of a slow cooker is at the bottom, having denser root vegetables closest to the heat ensures they will be fork-tender by the time it's done without overcooking the meat and more-tender veggies.

Best way to infuse big flavor

Fresh herbs add tons of flavor to all sorts of dishes—trouble is, when you sprinkle them into your slow cooker with the rest of the ingredients, you notice they seem to disappear once the meal is ready for serving. Next time, wait until the last 30 minutes of cooking to add in—that way, the herbs won't wilt too much or get too soft. Another option: Substitute in dried herbs, as you can cook them for longer to help them bloom and become fragrant.

Baking Soda
Vinegar
Pyrex

No-work magic for sparkling clean

Love the ease of a slow cooker but hate scrubbing the crock? Try this: Add in ½ cup each of baking soda and distilled vinegar plus enough water to cover leftover bits of food. Cover, set to low and let sit for 3 to 4 hours. Turn off the heat and let the mixture cool before rinsing. Stuck-on food just melts away!

How to make *any* recipe in your slow cooker

Give your favorite meals a slow-cooker makeover! Simply use the handy chart below to convert cooking times from traditional recipes that are cooked over medium-low heat on a stovetop or at 350°F in the oven. Note: Because the slow-cooker lid slows down evaporation, for dishes that call for liquids, you'll want to cut down the amount by one-third to one-half. A good guideline? Add enough liquid so it just covers the meat and vegetables.

TRADITIONAL RECIPE	SLOW COOKER ON LOW	SLOW COOKER ON HIGH
15 to 30 minutes	4 to 6 hours	1½ to 2½ hours
35 to 45 minutes	6 to 8 hours	3 to 4 hours
50 minutes to 3 hours	8 to 10 hours	4 to 6 hours

Latest slow-cooker updates

These smart picks offer advanced features that make life in the kitchen a whole lot easier

SEAR FOODS IN ONE STEP

The Hamilton Beach Sear & Cook Slow Cooker ($75, Amazon.com) is earning raves from chefs and home cooks alike. The reason: Its removable insert can be placed on the stovetop or transferred to the oven, making it easy to sear ingredients for stews or to broil dishes after cooking to add tons of caramelized flavor.

PERFECTLY COOK MEAT EVERY TIME

There's nothing more frustrating than ending up with a too-tough roast. But thanks to the probe on the 7 Qt. Black + Decker Digital Slow Cooker with Temperature Probe and Precision Sous-Vide ($75, Walmart.com), you can switch modes and keep the meat warm once the internal temperature has reached its desired point.

MEALS READY WHEN YOU WANT

No need to worry about overcooking with the Cuisinart PSC-650 Stainless Steel 6.5 Qt. Programmable Slow Cooker ($100, Amazon.com). With its 24-hour cook time and digital timer, you can program it in the morning, and when it's done cooking, the cooker flips itself to "keep warm" mode.

Adobe Stock (2); Lines + Angles; DeAnn Berger

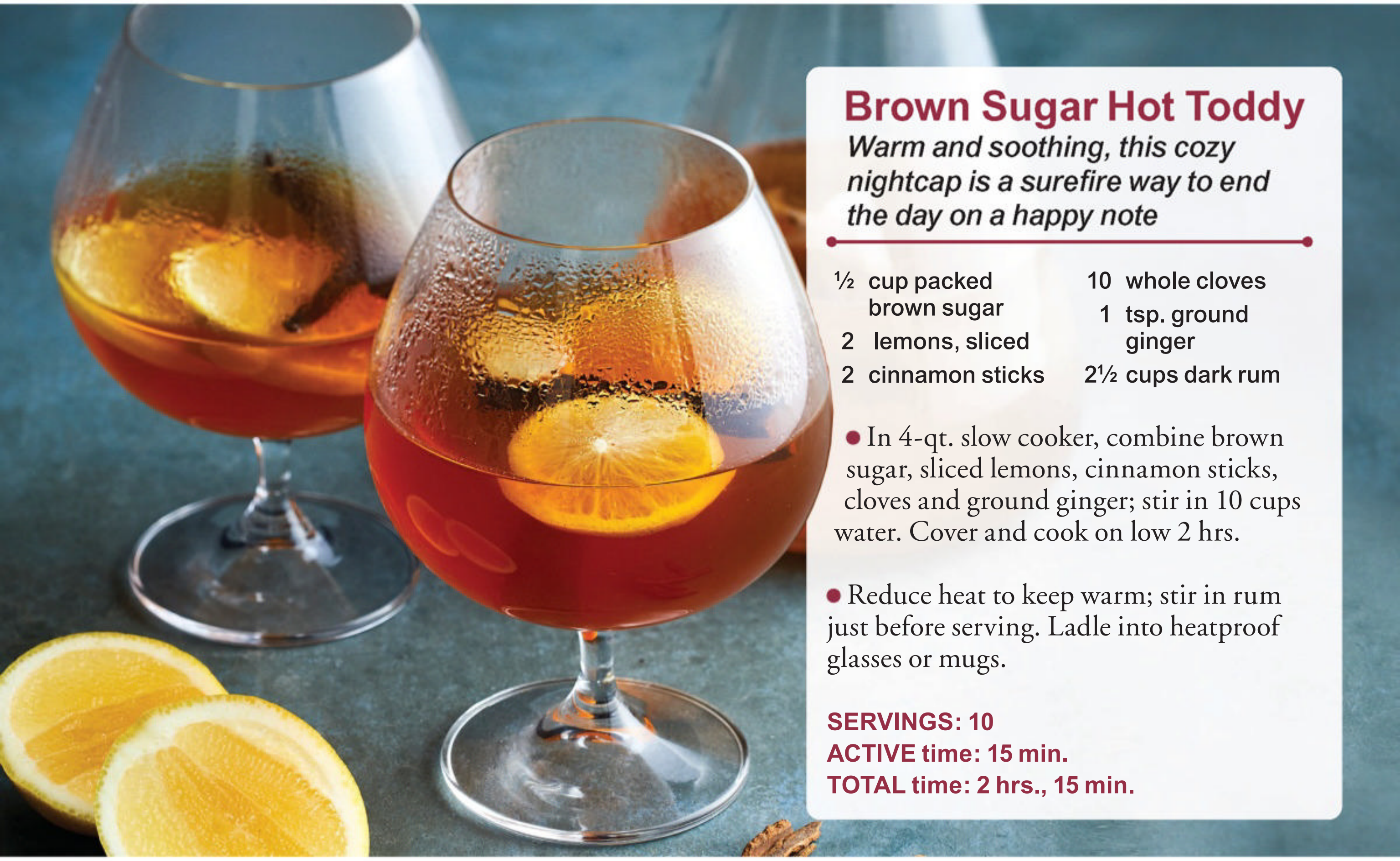
Entertaining made simple!

● **Keep cocktails warm all night long.** The slow cooker makes it a cinch to whip up a big batch of spiked sips, keeping it warm for hours and allowing guests to help themselves. However, cooking off the alcohol can be a concern. The save: Stir in alcohols and liqueurs and heat on a low setting for no more than 2 hrs., then turn cooker to the warm setting so your drink doesn't lose its "punch."

● **Serve 2 hot dips at once.** Why choose between spinach-artichoke or queso? Creating a barrier in the middle of your slow cooker makes it possible to serve two different dips at their bubbly best. To do: Fold a few sheets of heavy-duty foil so it's ¼"-thick and the height and depth of your cooker, then set in the middle to form a divider in your crock. Next, line each side with a slow-cooker liner and fill each with separate dip ingredients. Cook, and *voilà!*

● **Create a showstopping dessert bar.** An ice-cream toppings bar is always a hit. But warm ingredients tend to cool quickly, yielding a less-than-satisfying sundae. The fix: Fill mason jars with hot fudge, caramel and more. Place them in the cooker, add enough water to reach halfway up, then set to warm and serve. This will keep them deliciously drizzly and spoonable.

Cozy up to a cup



Brown Sugar Hot Toddy

Warm and soothing, this cozy nightcap is a surefire way to end the day on a happy note

½ cup packed brown sugar
2 lemons, sliced
2 cinnamon sticks
10 whole cloves
1 tsp. ground ginger
2½ cups dark rum

- In 4-qt. slow cooker, combine brown sugar, sliced lemons, cinnamon sticks, cloves and ground ginger; stir in 10 cups water. Cover and cook on low 2 hrs.

- Reduce heat to keep warm; stir in rum just before serving. Ladle into heatproof glasses or mugs.

SERVINGS: 10
ACTIVE time: 15 min.
TOTAL time: 2 hrs., 15 min.

Coconut Chai Latte

With the perfect helping of honey, this 'hug in a mug' is simply irresistible

8 black tea bags
8 cups boiling water
4 cups unsweetened coconut milk
⅓ cup honey
4 cinnamon sticks
1 tsp. whole allspice
1 tsp. whole cloves
4 star anise pods
Cocowhip, ground nutmeg and additional star anise pods (optional)

- In 4-qt. slow cooker, combine tea bags and water; cook on high 15 min.; remove tea bags. Stir in milk, honey, cinnamon, allspice, cloves and 4 star anise pods. Cover and cook on low 3 hrs.; strain.

- Ladle into mugs. If desired, top with cocowhip, sprinkle with nutmeg and garnish with star anise.

SERVINGS: 10
ACTIVE time: 20 min.
TOTAL: 3 hrs., 35 min.

Adobe Stock (2);
Lines + Angles (2)

# of mmm!

Whip up a batch of these drinks in your slow cooker, then sit back and let guests help themselves

Hot Cocoa Cocktail

A splash of Kahlúa transforms everyone's favorite cold-weather warmer into the ultimate party-starter

- 1 (12 oz.) pkg. semisweet chocolate chips
- 10 cups milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder + additional
- 3½ tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 cups Kahlúa
- Mini marshmallows (optional)

● In 6-qt. slow cooker, combine chocolate chips, milk, heavy cream, sugar, ½ cup cocoa powder and vanilla extract; stir until blended. Cover; cook on high, stirring occasionally, 3 hrs.

● Just before serving, stir in Kahlúa; ladle into mugs. If desired, garnish with mini marshmallows and sprinkle with additional cocoa powder. Serve immediately.

SERVINGS: 10
ACTIVE time: 15 min.
TOTAL time: 3 hrs., 15 min.

Bourbon Apple Cider

Spiced bourbon combines with apple juice, fresh fruit and maple syrup to jazz up this traditional tipple

- 8 cups apple juice
- 3 oranges, sliced
- 2 Gala apples, cored, sliced
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 3 star anise pods
- ⅓ cup maple syrup
- 1½ cups spiced bourbon, such as Wild Turkey
- Ground cinnamon (optional)

● In 6-qt. slow cooker, stir together apple juice, oranges, apples, cinnamon, star anise and maple syrup. Cover; cook on low 4 hrs.

● Just before serving, stir in bourbon; ladle into heatproof glasses. If desired, sprinkle with ground cinnamon.

SERVINGS: 10
ACTIVE time: 20 min.
TOTAL time: 4 hrs., 20 min.

Cocoa Irish Coffee

Rich chocolate syrup turns this twist on a classic after-dinner drink into dessert in a glass

- 8 cups strong brewed coffee
- ¼ cup chocolate syrup
- 2 Tbs. coconut sugar
- 2 cups Irish whiskey
- Whipped cream and ground cinnamon (optional)

- In 4-qt. slow cooker, combine coffee, chocolate syrup and coconut sugar. Cover; cook on low 2 hrs.

- Just before serving, stir in whiskey; ladle into heatproof glasses. If desired, top with whipped cream and ground cinnamon.

SERVINGS: 10
ACTIVE time: 25 min.
TOTAL time: 2 hrs., 25 min.

Mulled White Wine

Zingy pomegranate juice and warm spices give this libation a sweet kick

- 2 (750 ml.) btls. white wine
- 2 cups pomegranate juice
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 oranges, sliced
- 4 cinnamon sticks + additional
- 3 star anise pods
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

- In 4-qt. slow cooker, combine wine, juice, honey, orange slices, 4 cinnamon sticks, star anise and vanilla. Cover; cook on low 3 hrs.

- Ladle into heatproof glasses or mugs. Garnish with additional cinnamon sticks.

SERVINGS: 10
ACTIVE time: 5 min.
TOTAL time: 3 hrs., 5 min.

Adobe Stock (2)

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Adobe Stock

Breakfasts

Your mornings just got a little bit easier! Our make-ahead breakfast and brunch favorites, such as cinnamon-kissed oatmeal and an impressive yet almost effortless frittata, are the easy secrets to jump-starting the most important meal of the day. Whether it's a weekday rush made stress-free or a weekend brunch that's extra-relaxing, it's time to whip up a morning marvel and dig in!

SOFTEN BUTTER FAST

Ready to get mixing only to find the butter is still ice cold? Try this: Cut up butter into pieces. Pour boiling water into a bowl, spill it out then wipe dry. Now, flip over the bowl and use it to cover the butter for 5 minutes. The residual heat will soften the pieces.

Macadamia-Banana Nut Bread

Make this tasty loaf ahead, cover with plastic wrap then foil, and store in the freezer for up to a month

- **1¾ cups all-purpose flour**
- **2 tsp. baking powder**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. baking soda**
- **⅓ cup butter, at room temp.**
- **¾ cup packed light brown sugar**
- **2 eggs, beaten**
- **3 ripe bananas, peeled, mashed**
- **1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- **½ cup coarsely chopped macadamia nuts**
- **Softened butter (optional)**

● Coat 8¼"x4½"x2½" glass loaf pan with cooking spray; place in oval 6-qt. slow cooker. In medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda; reserve.

● On medium-high speed, beat butter and sugar until light and creamy, about 2 min. On medium, beat in eggs, one at a time; add mashed bananas and vanilla extract. Beat until smooth, 2 min. On low, gradually beat in reserved flour mixture until smooth. Gently fold in ¼ cup macadamia nuts.

● Transfer batter to loaf pan; smooth top. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup macadamia nuts. Place double layer paper towels under lid; cover slow cooker. Cook on high until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 2½ hrs. Remove loaf pan from slow cooker; transfer to rack. Cool 15–20 min. Transfer from pan to rack; let cool. If desired, serve with softened butter.

Servings: 8. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 4 hrs.
Calories: 380 **Protein:** 6g **Fat:** 18g (7g sat.) **Chol.:** 65mg **Carbs.:** 51g **Sodium:** 260mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 24g

Food & Photo; Shutterstock; Are Media

Spinach and Ham Egg Cups

We added whole milk and grated Parmesan to the egg mixture to give these creamy bites extra richness

- **3 eggs**
- **½ cup milk**
- **3 Tbs. grated Parmesan**
- **⅛ tsp. salt**
- **⅛ tsp. pepper**
- **¼ cup chopped deli-sliced ham**
- **¼ cup baby spinach, chopped**
- **2 Tbs. drained diced pimiento**

● Coat 4 (4 oz.) ramekins or custard cups with cooking spray. In bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, 2 Tbs. Parmesan, salt and pepper. Divide ham, spinach and pimiento among ramekins; pour in egg mixture.

● Transfer ramekins to bottom of 4-qt. slow cooker. Place double layer paper towels under lid; cover slow cooker with lid. Cook on high until no longer wet in centers, about 1 hr., 30 min.

● Carefully remove ramekins from slow cooker. Dividing evenly, sprinkle with remaining 1 Tbs. Parmesan. Let cool slightly. If desired, run knife around edges of fillings; invert onto serving platter. Flip right side up.

EASY VARIATION

Make 'em Herb Feta Egg Cups: Sub in crumbled feta for the Parmesan and finely chopped red onion for pimiento. Add 1 Tbs. each chopped fresh parsley and dill to egg mixture. Omit the ham. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 4. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 15 min.
Calories: 100 **Protein:** 8g **Fat:** 6g (3g sat.) **Chol.:** 150mg **Carbs.:** 3g **Sodium:** 310mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 2g

Steel-Cut Cinnamon Oatmeal

Coconut milk and honey combine in this twist on a classic for a delicious way to jump-start your day

- **1 cup steel-cut oats**
- **1 (13.5 oz.) can unsweetened coconut milk**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **2 cinnamon sticks**
- **2 Tbs. honey**
- **½ cup sliced strawberries**
- **2 Tbs. toasted coconut flakes**
- **Toasted sliced almonds and lime zest (optional)**

● Line 4-qt. slow cooker with slow cooker liner; coat liner with cooking spray. In liner in slow cooker, combine oats, coconut milk, 2½ cups water and salt. Stir in cinnamon sticks. Cover; cook on low until oatmeal is creamy, 7–8 hrs. Remove and discard cinnamon sticks. Stir in 2 Tbs. honey.

● Divide oatmeal mixture among bowls. Top with sliced strawberries; sprinkle with coconut flakes. If desired, garnish with sliced almonds and lime zest. Serve immediately.

EASY VARIATIONS

Make it Blueberry Almond Steel-Cut Oatmeal: Sub in 1½ cups unsweetened almond milk for the coconut milk. Continue with recipe as directed. Omit the strawberries and coconut. Top with blueberries and toasted almonds.

Make it Fruit 'n' Yogurt Steel-Cut Oatmeal: Make oatmeal as directed. Omit toppings. Stir ½ cup chopped mixed dried fruit into cooked oatmeal. Top with low-fat vanilla Greek yogurt.

Servings: 4. Active time: 10 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 230 **Protein:** 5g **Fat:** 6g (3g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 41g **Sodium:** 150mg **Fiber:** 5g **Sugar:** 14g

Raspberry-Filled Sweet Rolls

Shortbread cookies and butter make it a snap to create the crispy topping

- **1½ tsp. + ¼ cup butter, at room temp.**
- **3 shortbread cookies, crumbled**
- **1 (¼ oz.) env. active dry yeast**
- **½ cup warm water (100°F–110°F)**
- **2½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **¼ cup sugar**
- **1 egg**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **½ cup raspberry cake and pastry filling, from 12 oz. can**

● Line side of 8-qt. slow cooker with 2" high, ¼" thick foil ring. Line bottom and ⅓ up side of slow cooker with parchment; coat with cooking spray. In bowl, work 1½ tsp. butter into crumbs; reserve. In bowl, mix yeast and water; let stand 5 min. On low speed, beat yeast mixture, flour, remaining butter, sugar, egg and salt until dough forms. On lightly floured surface, knead until smooth, 3 min. Cover; let rest 10 min.

● On lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 15"x10" rectangle. Spread with filling leaving 1" border along one long side. Starting from other long side, roll up jelly roll-style into log; cut crosswise into 12 slices. Place slices cut sides up in slow cooker. Place double layer paper towels under lid. Cover slow cooker with lid. Cook on high until cooked through in center, about 2 hrs., topping with reserved cookie mixture during last 10 min. of cooking time. Using parchment paper, lift from slow cooker. If desired, broil 2 min.

Servings: 12. Active time: 40 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 50 min.
Calories: 390 **Protein:** 3g **Fat:** 29g (18g sat.) **Chol.:** 90mg **Carbs.:** 32g **Sodium:** 290mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 8g

TRICK TO SLICE BUNS LIKE A PRO

It can be tedious and sometimes require an extremely sharp knife to cut sweet rolls without squishing the buns around the filling. The quick fix: Unwaxed dental floss makes it a breeze to create uniformly round rolls. Simply place a piece of floss under the log 1" from the end. Bring the ends up, cross them over the top and pull to slice off a perfect pinwheel.

Adobe Stock;
Lines + Angles

EASY SECRET TO SLICING ONIONS WITHOUT TEARS

Onions add sweet-pungent flavor to dishes, but slicing them always seems to result in teary eyes. The fix: Light a candle near your cutting board—the flame oxidizes and deteriorates the sulfuric compound that's responsible for eye irritation.

Caramelized Onion and Salmon Frittata

Tangy goat cheese adds the perfect touch of creaminess to this brunch favorite packed with big, bold flavors

1	**Tbs. olive oil**
1	**onion, thinly sliced**
1	**Tbs. sugar**
8	**eggs**
⅔	**cup heavy cream**
2	**tsp. chopped fresh thyme**
¼	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
2	**oz. smoked salmon, cut into 1½" pieces**
2	**oz. goat cheese, crumbled**
½	**cup baby arugula**

● In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sugar; cook, stirring often, until softened and lightly browned, about 10 min. Add ½ cup water; reduce heat to medium-low. Cover; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is caramel color and very tender, about 15 min. Transfer to small bowl; let cool.

● Line 4-qt. slow cooker, preferably round, with slow-cooker liner; coat liner with cooking spray. In large bowl, whisk together eggs, cream, thyme, salt and pepper. Transfer to slow cooker. Cook on high until almost set, 1 hr., 15 min. Top with caramelized onions, smoked salmon and goat cheese. Cover; cook on high until no longer wet in center, about 10 min. Using liner, lift frittata from slow cooker. Transfer to serving plate. Top with arugula.

Servings: 4. Active time: 25 min.
Total time: 1 hr., 50 min.
Calories: 390 **Protein:** 19g **Fat:** 31g (15g sat.) **Chol.:** 435mg **Carbs.:** 8g **Sodium:** 440mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 7g

Are Media; Adobe Stock; HBB

Hash Brown Casserole

Store-bought potatoes with peppers and onions help get this dish into the cooker in just 20 minutes

8	**oz. bulk pork sausage**
7	**eggs**
¾	**cup half-and-half**
¼	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
1	**(28 oz.) pkg. frozen diced potatoes with onions and peppers (not thawed)**
1	**cup shredded Colby Jack cheese**
1	**(4 oz.) jar diced pimientos, drained**
	Chopped chives (optional)

● Line 6-qt. slow cooker with slow-cooker liner. Coat slow-cooker liner and large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat skillet over medium heat. Add sausage; cook, stirring and breaking up with wooden spoon if needed until no longer pink, about 10 min. Using slotted spoon, transfer sausage to paper towels to drain.

● In large bowl, whisk together eggs, half-and-half, salt and pepper. Add potatoes, cheese, pimientos and cooked sausage; toss until combined. Transfer to slow cooker, spreading evenly and flattening top with spoon. Line lid with double layer of paper towels. Cover slow cooker with lid. Cook on high until no longer wet in center, about 3 hrs., 30 min. Using liner, lift potato mixture from slow cooker. Transfer to serving plate; remove liner. If desired, garnish with chives.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 3 hrs., 50 min.
Calories: 200 **Protein:** 17g **Fat:** 16g (7g sat.) **Chol.:** 200mg **Carbs.:** 18g **Sodium:** 360mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 3g

Chocolate Chip Scones

For extra mmm, spread these easy from-scratch bites with butter and your favorite fruity jam while still warm

2½	**cups all-purpose flour**
¼	**cup + 1 tsp. sugar**
1	**Tbs. baking powder**
½	**tsp. salt**
½	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
½	**cup butter, cold, cubed**
½	**cup bittersweet chocolate chips**
⅔	**cup milk**
1	**egg yolk**

- Line bottom and 3" up side of 6-qt. slow cooker with parchment paper. In medium bowl, combine flour, ¼ cup sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon; add butter. Using fingers, rub butter into flour mixture until only small bits remain. Add chocolate chips and milk and knead until dough is shaggy but evenly mixed.

- Press mixture evenly and firmly into bottom and part way up side of slow cooker. Place double layer paper towels under lid. Cover slow cooker with lid. Cook on high until scones are set and spring back to the touch, about 1½ hrs.

- Heat oven to 400°F. Using edges of parchment paper, transfer scones to cutting board; remove parchment paper. Cut scone into four equal sections, then cut each section in half to create 8 triangles. Place scones 1" apart on baking sheet.

- In small bowl, whisk together egg yolk with 1 tsp. water. Brush over scones; bake until lightly browned along edges, 4–5 min. Transfer to rack. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tsp. sugar while still hot. Let cool.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 1 hr., 55 min.

Calories: 350 **Protein:** 6g **Fat:** 18g (11g sat.) **Chol.:** 55mg **Carbs.:** 44g **Sodium:** 260mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 11g

Fruit & Nut Granola

This crunchy-sweet cup is easy to customize with the dried fruit of your choice

½	**cup unsweetened coconut flakes**
4	**cups old-fashioned oats**
⅓	**cup honey + additional (warmed) for drizzling**
¼	**cup pepitas**
¼	**cup oil**
¼	**cup sliced almonds**
½	**cup dried cranberries**
1	**Granny Smith apple**
¾	**cup plain yogurt**
1	**cup blueberries**

- In dry nonstick skillet, spread coconut flakes out in single layer. Over medium heat, cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly toasted along edges, 2–3 min. Transfer to plate; let cool. Reserve.

- Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. In bowl, combine oats, ⅓ cup honey, pepitas, oil and almonds; toss until evenly coated and combined. Transfer to slow cooker and spread out in even layer.

- Cover and cook on high, stirring every 15 min., until oats, pepitas and almonds are lightly toasted, about 1 hr. Add cranberries and stir to combine. Transfer mixture to rimmed baking sheet; let cool.

- Core and grate apple. Divide granola among serving glasses. Dividing evenly top with grated apple, then yogurt and blueberries. Sprinkle with reserved toasted coconut. If desired, drizzle with honey.

Servings: 12. Active time: 15 min.
Total time: 1 hr., 15 min.
Calories: 250 **Protein:** 5g **Fat:** 10g (3g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 37g **Sodium:** 10mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 16g

Adobe Stock (2); Are Media

Brioche French Toast

We soaked thick slices of sweet bread in cinnamon-kissed eggs and layered them with Nutella to create this tasty treat

6 eggs
¼ cup sugar
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
1½ cups milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
8 slices brioche bread
8 tsp. butter
6 Tbs. Nutella
½ cup maple syrup
Berries and sliced almonds (optional)

- In medium bowl, whisk together eggs, sugar, salt and cinnamon. Add milk and vanilla; whisk until smooth. Add 1 slice brioche; let soak 30 sec.; flip and soak remaining side, 30 sec. In skillet, melt 1 tsp. butter over medium-low heat; add brioche. Cook, flipping once, until golden, about 1 min. per side. Transfer to plate. Repeat with remaining butter and brioche. Place two slices side by side in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. Spread 1 Tbs. Nutella over each slice. Repeat layering twice. Top with remaining brioche.

- Place double layer paper towels under lid. Cover slow cooker with lid. Cook on high until tops spring back to touch, 1 hr. Serve warm with maple syrup. If desired, top with berries and almonds.

Servings: 4. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 1 hr., 20 min.
Calories: 640 **Protein:** 19g **Fat:** 24g (16g sat.) **Chol.:** 335mg **Carbs.:** 86g **Sodium:** 690mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 59

Adobe Stock

Starters

Kick off your next gathering with our easiest-ever snacks and small bites! We’ve got all the party foods everyone craves—think spiced-right wings served with a sweet ’n’ tangy sauce, crunchy snack mix that’ll keep you coming back for more, modern updates on retro-fun fondue and so much more. So grab some napkins and get ready for a deliciously good time!

Salsa Con Queso Dip

Convenient canned soup and diced tomatoes with chilies make it a snap to toss this cheesy bowl together

1	**(14.5 oz.) can petite diced tomatoes with mild green chilies (do not drain)**
1	**(12 oz.) pkg. Velveeta slices, sharp cheddar**
1	**(10.5 oz.) can Healthy Request condensed cheddar cheese soup**
8	**oz. pepper Jack cheese**
2	**scallions**
½	**cup cilantro leaves**
2	**Tbs. lime juice**

Chopped tomato and additional chopped cilantro (optional)

- Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Place tomatoes with liquid in bottom of slow cooker. Remove wrappers from cheese slices; place cheddar slices in bottom of slow cooker. Top with condensed soup.

- Cut pepper Jack cheese into ¾" pieces; place in slow cooker. Cover; cook on low 2 hrs.

- Chop scallions and cilantro. Stir in scallions, chopped cilantro and lime juice until smooth. If desired, garnish with chopped tomato and additional chopped cilantro.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Salsa Con Queso Blanco: Sub in Velveeta Queso Blanco for Velveeta cheddar slices and Healthy Request condensed cream of celery soup for cheddar cheese soup. Continue with recipe as directed. Garnish as desired.

Servings: 12. Active time: 10 min. Total time: 2 hrs.
Calories: 160 **Protein:** 9g **Fat:** 9g (5g sat.) **Chol.:** 30mg **Carbs.:** 9g **Sodium:** 750mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 4g

Spicy-Sweet Chicken Wings

A touch of honey in the glaze is the perfect complement to the chili sauce on these crispy Asian-inspired wings

¾	**cup chili sauce, such as Heinz**
⅓	**cup honey**
3	**Tbs. apple cider vinegar**
3	**Tbs. cayenne pepper sauce**
½	**tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
¼	**cup all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp. garlic powder**
¼	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
3	**lbs. chicken wing sections, tips discarded**
1	**scallion, green part only, sliced**
1	**hot chili pepper, sliced**

- Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In medium bowl, combine chili sauce, honey, vinegar, cayenne pepper sauce and pepper flakes. Reserve ¾ cup sauce.

- In bowl, combine flour, garlic powder, salt and pepper; add wings. Toss until coated, shaking off excess. Dip wings in remaining sauce mixture. Transfer to bottom of slow cooker. Cover; cook on low until cooked through, 3–3½ hrs.

- Position oven rack 6" from heat source. Heat broiler. Line rimmed baking sheet with foil; coat with cooking spray. Using slotted spoon, remove wings from slow cooker; transfer to baking sheet. Brush with ¼ cup reserved sauce mixture. Broil until lightly browned, 3–4 min. Transfer to serving plate. Top with scallion and chili pepper. Serve with remaining sauce mixture.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 4 hrs.
Calories: 270 **Protein:** 17g **Fat:** 12g (4g sat.) **Chol.:** 100mg **Carbs.:** 23g **Sodium:** 710mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 15g

OUTSMART STICKY MESSES

Whenever a recipe calls for honey or other sticky ingredients, it seems that more gets left in the measuring cup than makes it into the mixing bowl. Next time, spritz the inside of the cup with cooking spray. Greasing the cup will help the sticky ingredient slide out with ease.

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GENIUS USE FOR PICKLE JUICE

If you've used the last few pickles in the jar, don't just toss the briny liquid. Try adding a splash to your meat and poultry marinades. The acidic vinegar in the juice will soften the muscle fibers and allow them to retain more moisture, resulting in a tender, juicy texture without dramatically changing the meat's taste.

Barbecue Beef Nachos

This Southwest spin on a Tex-Mex favorite is a breeze to layer up thanks to store-bought BBQ sauce

1 lb. ground beef
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. smoked paprika
1 tsp. onion powder
1 cup barbecue sauce
2 Tbs. tomato paste
8 cups tortilla chips, from 12-oz. pkg.
1 small red pepper, diced
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar
½ cup drained sliced dill pickle chips
⅓ cup drained pickled sliced jalapeño peppers

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker and large nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat skillet over medium heat. Add ground beef; cook stirring and breaking up beef with spoon, until no longer pink, about 10 min. Drain. Transfer meat to slow cooker. Stir in garlic, smoked paprika and onion powder.

● In small bowl, combine barbecue sauce and tomato paste; stir into beef mixture. Cover; cook on low 3 hrs. Using slotted spoon, transfer beef mixture to bowl.

● Heat oven to 400°F. Arrange half of tortilla chips in bottom of 2-qt. (11"x7") baking dish. Top with half of beef mixture and half of pepper, cheddar, pickle chips and jalapeño slices. Repeat layering with tortilla chips and remaining ingredients. Bake until hot and cheese is melted, about 10 min.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 3 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 370 **Protein:** 17g **Fat:** 17g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 45mg **Carbs.:** 39g **Sodium:** 820mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 12g

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Party Snack Mix

Make a double batch of this savory mix and store the extra in an air-tight container at room temperature for up to a week

6 Tbs. butter
2 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. salt
6 cups Chex cereal, such as wheat, rice and/or corn
2 cups halved pretzel sticks
1½ cups cocktail peanuts

● Coat 6-qt. slow cooker, preferably oval, with cooking spray. In medium microwave-safe bowl, microwave butter in 15-sec. intervals, stirring, until melted.

● Stir in Worcestershire sauce, onion powder, garlic powder and salt. Transfer cereal, pretzel sticks and peanuts to bottom of slow cooker; toss until combined. Add butter mixture; toss until evenly coated. Place 3 layers paper towels under lid. Cover; cook on low 2 hrs., stirring every 30 min.

EASY VARIATIONS

Make it Spiced Snack Mix: Add 1 Tbs. cayenne pepper sauce and ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper to butter mixture. Continue with recipe.

Make it Pizza Party Snack Mix: Omit salt. Add 1 tsp. dried oregano and increase garlic powder to 1 tsp. Sub in Parmesan flavored Goldfish crackers and 1 cup diced pepperoni for pretzels and peanuts. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 16. Active time: 10 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 170 **Protein:** 4g **Fat:** 10g (4g sat.) **Chol.:** 10mg **Carbs.:** 18g **Sodium:** 270mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 2g

Cranberry-Glazed Meatballs

Canned cranberry sauce comes together with orange juice and Dijon to create the glaze on these spicy-sweet bites

12 oz. ground beef
12 oz. ground pork
2 eggs, lightly beaten
½ cup Italian-style dry breadcrumbs
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. cayenne pepper sauce
½ tsp. dried oregano
½ tsp. ground cumin
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1½ cups whole-berry cranberry sauce
2 Tbs. orange juice
1 Tbs. Dijon mustard
Toasted pine nuts and watercress (optional)

- Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In large bowl, mix beef, pork, eggs, breadcrumbs, garlic, pepper sauce, oregano, cumin, salt and pepper. Divide into 24 portions; roll each portion into ball.

- Coat nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium heat. In 2 batches, cook meatballs, rotating, until browned, 4–5 min. per batch. Transfer to slow cooker. In bowl, mix cranberry sauce, juice and mustard. Reserve ½ cup. Spoon remaining mixture over meatballs. Cover; cook on low 3 hrs.

- Heat broiler. Transfer meatballs to 2-qt. baking dish. Brush with reserved cranberry mixture. Broil 2–3 min. If desired, garnish with nuts and watercress.

Servings: 12. Active time: 35 min. Total time: 3 hrs., 35 min.
Calories: 220 **Protein:** 14g **Fat:** 10g (4g sat.) **Chol.:** 75mg **Carbs.:** 16g **Sodium:** 220mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 12g

SQUEEZE EVEN MORE OUT OF CITRUS

Fresh orange and lemon juice add tangy zip to glazes, sauces and other dishes, so you want to squeeze out every drop of goodness. The trick that makes this easy to do: Microwave the fruit for 15 seconds, then juice as usual. The heat will break down the membranes in the flesh so it releases the maximum amount of juice.

Spinach Artichoke Dip

Three kinds of cheese guarantee this classic starter cooks up extra rich—for added flavor, stir in some chopped basil

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese
1 (12 oz.) jar marinated artichoke hearts
3 cloves garlic
1 (8 oz.) pkg. shredded Italian cheese blend
½ cup grated Parmesan
1 (16 oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed (do not drain)
1 cup sour cream
3 scallions
½ tsp. cayenne pepper
¼ tsp. pepper
Bread bowl (optional)

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Cut cream cheese into ¾" cubes. Drain and chop artichoke hearts. Mince garlic. Transfer artichoke hearts to bottom of slow cooker.

● Top artichokes in slow cooker with cream cheese, shredded cheese, Parmesan, garlic and ¾ cup water. Cover; cook on low 1½ hrs. Stir in spinach and sour cream. Cover; cook on low 1 hr. Stir in scallions, cayenne pepper and pepper. If desired, serve in bread bowl.

● Make bread bowl: Using serrated knife, cut top third from 1 round loaf crusty bread. Pull out bread from bottom part of loaf, leaving ½"-thick shell. Cut up bread top and soft insides. Spread on baking sheet and toast at 350°F for 8 min. Fill bread bowl with dip.

Servings: 16. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 3 hrs.
Calories: 180 **Protein:** 5g **Fat:** 14g (8g sat.) **Chol.:** 45mg **Carbs.:** 8g **Sodium:** 260mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 3g

PAIR IT WITH HERBED CROUTONS

On rimmed baking sheet, toss torn bread from loaf (along with any day-old bread you have on hand) with olive oil, grated Parmesan, salt, pepper and your favorite dried herbs. Bake at 350°F until golden, 8–10 minutes. Serve immediately with Spinach Artichoke Dip or store in airtight container until ready to use.

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Food & Photo (2)

Bacon-Cheese Stuffed Potatoes

Rubbing the potatoes in oil and spices, then wrapping in foil helps flavor soak into the skin, giving these spuds an extra kick

8	**(6 oz.) baking potatoes**
4	**tsp. olive oil**
½	**tsp. garlic powder**
½	**tsp. salt**
4	**slices bacon**
4	**scallions**
1½	**cups shredded Colby Jack cheese, 6 oz.**
1	**cup light mayonnaise**
¼	**tsp. pepper**

- Prick potatoes all over with fork; rub with olive oil, garlic powder and salt. Wrap each potato in foil; place in slow cooker. Cover; cook on low until tender, 6–7 hrs.

- Meanwhile, dice bacon. Line plate with paper towels. Coat large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium heat. Add bacon; cook, stirring, until crisp, 10 min. Transfer bacon to paper towel–lined plate; drain.

- Trim and chop scallions. In bowl, combine shredded Colby Jack cheese, light mayonnaise, cooked bacon, chopped scallions and pepper. Remove potatoes from slow cooker; cool slightly until easy to handle. Unwrap; halve lengthwise. Line rimmed baking sheet with foil; coat with cooking spray. Place potatoes on pan. Divide cheese mixture among potato halves. Heat broiler. Broil potatoes on high until lightly browned and cheese is bubbly, 2–3 min.

Servings: 8. Active time: 25 min.
Total time: 7 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 350 **Protein:** 10g **Fat:** 20g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 35mg **Carbs.:** 34g **Sodium:** 520mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 3g

BEST WAY TO STORE BACON

Recipes often call for just a few slices of bacon. And though it freezes well, it's not easy to pull out 1 or 2 slices once the package has frozen. The easy fix: Roll up single slices, arrange them in a freezer bag and freeze. Next time you need a few slices, you can grab just what you need.

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Buffalo Chicken Dip

Serve up this cheesy dip in individual ramekins, or keep it in the slow cooker and let everyone help themselves

- **1 (12 oz.) boneless, skinless chicken breast**
- **⅛ tsp. salt**
- **⅛ tsp. pepper**
- **2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese**
- **4 cloves garlic, minced**
- **½ cup Buffalo wing sauce + additional**
- **½ cup mayonnaise**
- **1 cup shredded sharp cheddar**
- **⅓ cup crumbled blue cheese**
- **Tortilla chips (optional)**

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Season chicken with salt and pepper on both sides. Coat nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium-high heat. Add chicken to skillet; cook until browned, 5 min. Flip; reduce heat to medium-low. Cover; cook until meat thermometer inserted into thickest part reads 165°F, about 15 min. Let cool. Shred chicken into pieces; transfer to bottom of slow cooker.

● Cut cream cheese into ¾" cubes. Place ½ garlic and cubed cream cheese in slow cooker. In bowl, combine wing sauce, mayonnaise, remaining garlic and ½ cup water; pour into slow cooker. Top with cheddar and blue cheese. Cover; cook on low until cheese is melted, 2½ hrs. Stir until smooth. If desired, add additional sauce and serve with tortilla chips.

Servings: 12. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 3 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 280 **Protein:** 12g **Fat:** 25g (11g sat.) **Chol.:** 75mg **Carbs.:** 3g **Sodium:** 630mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 2g

SPEEDIEST WAY TO PEEL GARLIC

When your dish calls for lots of garlic, there's no need to peel them individually. Instead, separate and lightly smash the cloves, then put them in a bowl with the peels still on. Cover with another bowl (ideally the same size) and shake for 10 seconds. The friction will cause the peels to slip right off!

Greek Meatballs Two Ways

Sun-dried tomatoes and feta make these orbs extra juicy

- **1 lb. ground chicken**
- **1 lb. ground lamb**
- **2 eggs**
- **1 small onion, finely chopped**
- **2 garlic cloves, minced**
- **2 tsp. lemon zest**
- **½ cup plain dry breadcrumbs**
- **2 tsp. salt**
- **1 tsp. pepper**
- **½ tsp. ground cumin**
- **¼ cup mint leaves, chopped**
- **¼ cup parsley, chopped**
- **½ cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes**
- **1 cup crumbled feta cheese**
- **¼ cup olive oil**
- **¾ cup chicken broth, warmed**

- Place chicken and lamb in separate medium bowls. To each bowl, add 1 egg and half of onion, garlic, lemon zest, breadcrumbs, salt, pepper, cumin, mint and parsley; mix until just blended. Fold in half of sun-dried tomatoes and feta into each mixture. Form each into 18 meatballs (about 2 Tbs. each ball).

- In large skillet, heat 2 Tbs. oil over medium heat. Cook chicken meatballs, turning, 4–5 min. until browned; transfer to one side of 6-qt. slow cooker. Repeat with remaining oil and lamb meatballs; place next to chicken meatballs. Pour broth over meatballs; cover and cook on high until meatballs are cooked through, 2–3 hrs.

Servings: 18. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 25 min.
Calories: 170 **Protein:** 12g **Fat:** 12g (4g sat.) **Chol.:** 58mg **Carbs.:** 5g **Sodium:** 425mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 2g

Cheese Fondue

With two flavors to choose from, these melty dips are sure to please everyone in your hungry crowd

White:

- **1 lb. shredded Gruyère cheese**
- **1 Tbs. cornstarch**
- **1 Tbs. butter**
- **1 shallot, minced**
- **1 clove garlic, minced**
- **1 cup dry white wine**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**

Pimiento:

- **1 lb. shredded cheddar cheese**
- **1 tsp. cornstarch**
- **1 cup dry white wine**
- **1 shallot, minced**
- **1 tsp. paprika**
- **½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
- **1 cup pimiento cheese**
- **2 Tbs. whiskey**
- **Crusty bread, torn**

- *For white:* In bowl, toss Gruyère with cornstarch. In pot, melt butter over low heat. Add shallot; cook, stirring, 2–3 min. Add garlic; cook 1 min. Transfer to 4-qt. slow cooker; add wine and pepper. Cover; cook on high 15 min. Stir in cheese mixture; cover. Cook, stirring every 15 min. until smooth, 1 hr.

- *For pimiento:* In bowl, toss cheddar with cornstarch. In 4-qt. slow cooker, mix wine, shallot, paprika and pepper flakes. Cover; cook on high 15 min. Stir in cheddar mixture. Cover; cook, stirring every 15 min., until melted, 45 min. Stir in pimiento cheese and whiskey; cover. Cook 10 min. Serve both fondues with crusty bread for dipping.

Servings: 12. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 55 min.
Calories: 480 **Protein:** 24g **Fat:** 31g (16g sat.) **Chol.:** 90mg **Carbs.:** 22g **Sodium:** 800mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 3g

PAIR IT WITH FUN DIPPERS

Crusty bread is traditional with fondue, but for even more *mmm,* set out extra classics like sliced apples and boiled baby potatoes—plus a few unexpected morsels like mini kielbasa, soft pretzel nuggets, cornichons or button mushrooms.

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QUICK TRICK TO RINSE BEANS

The next time you need a can of drained, rinsed beans, there's no need to dirty a strainer. Instead, punch a few holes in the top and bottom of the can, then hold it under the faucet, letting the water drain until the liquid runs clear. Then simply open the can as usual–no muss, no fuss!

Turkey and Bean Sliders

Our citrusy slaw is the perfect complement to spiced-just-right turkey

1 Tbs. olive oil
½ cup finely chopped red onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 lb. ground turkey
2 tsp. chili powder
¼ tsp. + ⅛ tsp. salt
1 (10 oz.) can mild diced tomatoes and green chilies
2 Tbs. tomato paste
1 (14.5 oz.) can pink beans, rinsed, drained
4 cups thinly sliced cabbage (6 oz.)
¼ cup bottled olive oil-and-vinegar salad dressing
2 tsp. lime juice
1 tsp. grated lime zest
16 slider rolls, split
4 scallions, thinly sliced
½ cup fresh cilantro leaves

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion; cook stirring, until softened, 5 min. Add garlic; cook, 30 sec. Add turkey, chili powder and ¼ tsp. salt; over medium-high heat, cook, stirring, until browned, 10 min. Transfer to bottom of slow cooker. In bowl, mix tomatoes and tomato paste; add to slow cooker. Cook on low 3 hrs. Stir in beans; cook until thickened, about 1 hr.

● In bowl, mix cabbage, dressing, lime juice, zest and remaining salt. Dividing evenly, top each roll bottom with slaw and turkey. Add scallions, cilantro and roll tops.

Servings: 8. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 360 **Protein:** 20g **Fat:** 10g (2g sat.) **Chol.:** 40mg **Carbs.:** 48g **Sodium:** 860mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 8g

Are Media; Food & Photo (2)

Roasted Red Pepper Soup Shooters

We blended coconut milk and day-old bread into the mix to add body and texture to these creamy shots

2 (12 oz.) jars roasted red peppers
2 shallots
3 cloves garlic
1 (13.5 oz.) can unsweetened coconut milk
1 cup vegetable broth
2 Tbs. white balsamic vinegar
2 bay leaves
3 cups stale whole wheat bread slices, torn, about 4½ oz.
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
Basil leaves (optional)

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Drain roasted red peppers. Peel and mince shallots and garlic. Place peppers, shallots and garlic in bottom of slow cooker. Top with coconut milk, broth, vinegar and bay leaves. Cover; cook on low 3 hrs. Let cool slightly. Remove bay leaves.

● In blender, in 3 batches, process pepper mixture, adding ⅓ of bread to each batch, until smooth. Return all soup to slow cooker; stir in salt and pepper. Cover; keep warm until serving in heatproof shooter glasses. If desired, garnish with basil.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Curried Roasted Pepper Shooters: Omit white balsamic. Add 1–2 Tbs. red curry paste to slow cooker with coconut milk. Continue with recipe. Garnish with cilantro.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 3 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 80 **Protein:** 2g **Fat:** 2g (1g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 14g **Sodium:** 530mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 7g

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Soups & Stews

Nothing could be cozier than cuddling up to a warm bowl of slow-cooked goodness! From soul-soothing chicken and dumpling stew to a comforting mugful of baked potato soup and so much more, these crowd-pleasing ladles of yum are guaranteed to be simply satisfying. Even better? They're extra easy on you!

French Onion Soup

Caramelizing onions in butter before adding them to the pot is the secret to jump-start this boldly flavored soup

2 Tbs. butter
6 cups thinly sliced onions
1 Tbs. all-purpose flour
6 cups chicken broth
2 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. dried thyme
6 (½" thick) slices French bread
½ cup shredded Gruyère cheese
Fresh thyme sprigs (optional)

- In skillet, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add onions; cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 12 min. Add flour; cook, stirring constantly, 1 min. Stir in ½ cup broth, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of skillet. Transfer mixture to 4-qt. slow cooker. Add Worcestershire sauce, thyme and remaining broth. Cover; cook on high 4 hrs.

- Heat broiler. Line rimmed baking sheet with foil. Arrange bread slices in single layer on foil. Dividing evenly, top with cheese. Broil until cheese is melted, 1–2 min. Divide soup among bowls; top with toasts. If desired, garnish with thyme sprigs.

EASY VARIATION

Make it White Bean French Onion Soup: Cook onions as directed. Add 1 sliced carrot to slow cooker with Worcestershire, thyme and remaining broth. Add 1½ cups cooked white beans to slow cooker during last 30 min. of cooking time. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 220 **Protein:** 16g **Fat:** 9g (5g sat.) **Chol.:** 35mg **Carbs.:** 18g **Sodium:** 475mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 6g

Chicken Stew

We browned tender chicken breasts in bacon drippings to infuse this meal with an extra dose of smoky deliciousness

2 strips bacon
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 garlic cloves, minced
8 oz. mushrooms, quartered
2 carrots (4 oz.), cut into 1" pieces
2 stalks celery (4 oz.), cut into ½" pieces
2 cups pearl onions
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1 Tbs. cornstarch
1 cup sugar snap peas, halved diagonally
2 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley

- In nonstick skillet, cook bacon over medium heat, flipping once, until crisp around edges, 1–2 min. per side. Transfer to cutting board; cut into ½" pieces; reserve. In same skillet, over medium heat, cook chicken in bacon drippings, flipping once, until lightly browned, 3–4 min. per side. Transfer to bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker.

- Add garlic, mushrooms, carrots, celery, onions, bacon, broth, 1 cup water, salt and pepper. Cover; on low, cook until vegetables and chicken are tender, about 7½ hrs. Transfer chicken to cutting board; cut each breast into 4 sections. Combine cornstarch with 2 Tbs. water; stir into mixture in slow cooker along with peas and chicken. Cover; cook until broth is slightly thickened and peas are tender, about 30 min. Top with parsley.

Servings: 4. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 270 **Protein:** 32g **Fat:** 7g (2g sat.) **Chol.:** 75mg **Carbs.:** 19g **Sodium:** 640mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 8g

PAIR IT WITH CHEESY BREADSTICKS

Brush 1 sheet thawed frozen puff pastry (from 17.3 oz. box) with 2 Tbs. olive oil. Sprinkle with 1 Tbs. minced oregano, ½ cup shredded mozzarella, ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Cut into 12 strips. Fold each in half, then twist. Bake at 375°F, flipping once, until golden, about 15 min.

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PAIR IT WITH SPINACH-BEET SALAD

In bowl, whisk together 1 Tbs. lemon juice, 1 Tbs. vinegar, ¼ cup olive oil and 1 tsp. minced shallot; season to taste with salt and pepper. Add 4 cups baby spinach, 1 cup sliced cooked beets and ¼ cup crumbled goat cheese; toss to coat. Top with toasted walnuts and dried cranberries.

Chicken and Vegetable Soup

A splash of lemon juice adds bright flavor to this dish made even easier with store-bought broth

- **3 carrots, peeled**
- **2 ribs celery**
- **2 turnips, trimmed**
- **1 onion**
- **½ cup fresh parsley leaves**
- **1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast halves**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **6 cups lower-sodium chicken broth**
- **1 cup cooked rice**
- **2 Tbs. lemon juice**

● Cut carrots in half lengthwise; thinly slice. Thinly slice celery. Cut turnips into ½" pieces. Chop onion. Chop parsley leaves; reserve.

● Place vegetables in bottom of 4-qt. slow cooker. Season chicken all over with salt and pepper. Place chicken on top of vegetables in slow cooker. Pour broth over chicken.

● Cover; cook on low 6 hrs. Transfer chicken to bowl or cutting board; using 2 forks, shred chicken. Stir chicken back into soup. Stir in rice and lemon juice; cook until heated through; about 15 min. Garnish with reserved parsley.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Chicken, Orzo 'n' Kale Soup: Omit turnip. Sub in cooked orzo for the rice. Continue with recipe. Add 1 cup thawed frozen chopped kale to soup with orzo and juice. Cook until heated through.

Servings: 4. Active time: 25 min.
Total time: 6 hrs., 25 min.
Calories: 247 **Protein:** 28g **Fat:** 3g (1g sat.) **Chol.:** 83mg **Carbs.:** 25g **Sodium:** 907mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 8g

Are Media (2); Shutterstock

Lentil & Butternut Squash Soup

We pureed some of the soup, then stirred it back into the pot to give this bowl extra richness and a creamier texture

- **1 butternut squash (1½ lbs.)**
- **1 small onion**
- **2 garlic cloves, minced**
- **1 (16 oz.) pkg. green or brown lentils**
- **2 Tbs. curry powder**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth**
- **4 cups baby spinach**
- **1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes**
- **1 tsp. lemon juice (optional)**

● Peel and chop butternut squash into 1" cubes. Chop onion. Place squash and onion in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. Top with garlic, lentils, curry powder, salt and pepper; stir to combine. In large bowl, combine broth with 2 cups water; pour over vegetables. Cover; cook on low 8 hrs. or until squash and lentils are tender. Cool slightly.

● In batches, in blender, process ½ of soup until mostly smooth. Return mixture to slow cooker along with spinach and tomatoes; stir. Cover; cook until spinach is wilted, about 10 min. If desired, stir in lemon juice just before serving.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Spiced Lentil Soup: Omit curry powder. Sub in 1 Tbs. chili powder, 1 tsp. ground cumin, 1 tsp. ground coriander and ¼ tsp. cayenne. Continue with recipe.

Servings: 6. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 35 min.
Calories: 390 **Protein:** 23g **Fat:** 3g (0g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 71g **Sodium:** 450mg **Fiber:** 21g **Sugar:** 9g

Sausage and Peppers Soup

We reimagined the classic sandwich into this warming bowl perfect for dunking bread into

- **1 lb. sweet Italian sausage**
- **1 onion, chopped**
- **2 tsp. fennel seeds**
- **4 cups low-sodium tomato juice**
- **2 red and/or green peppers, diced**
- **¾ tsp. salt**
- **½ tsp. garlic powder**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **1½ cups cooked orzo pasta**
- **Shredded Parmesan and fresh basil (optional)**

- Coat 12" nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium heat. Add sausage; cook, rotating, until browned all over, 5–7 min.; transfer to plate. In same skillet, add onions; cook, stirring, until softened, 7–8 min. Crush fennel seeds.

- In 6-qt. slow cooker, mix tomato juice, 2 cups water, peppers, onion, fennel seeds, salt, garlic powder and pepper. Add sausage, pushing down into liquid. Cover; cook on low until sausage is cooked through and vegetables are tender, 6 hrs. Transfer sausage to cutting board; slice into ⅓" rounds. Stir orzo and sausage into soup; cook until heated. If desired, top with Parmesan and basil.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Broccoli Rabe & Cannellini Soup: Sub in chicken broth for juice and 2 cups chopped broccoli rabe for peppers. Continue with recipe. Sub in 1 (15 oz.) can cannellini beans (rinsed, drained) for orzo.

Servings: 6. Active time: 30 min.
Total time: 6 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 294 **Protein:** 16g **Fat:** 16g (5g sat.) **Chol.:** 50mg **Carbs.:** 22g **Sodium:** 739mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 7g

PAIR IT WITH GARLICKY TOMATO BRUSCHETTA

Chop 2 cups red and/or yellow grape tomatoes. Mix tomatoes, ¼ cup chopped red onion, 2 Tbs. olive oil and 2 tsp. vinegar; season to taste with salt and pepper. Rub 18 French bread crostini with 1–2 cloves garlic. Spoon tomato topping over toasts; top with fresh basil.

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Carrot, Parsnip & Sweet Potato Soup

A dash of curry paste gives this silky smooth starter a kick

1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 sweet potatoes (1 lb.)
2 carrots (4 oz.)
1 parsnip (4 oz.)
2 Tbs. red curry paste, such as Thai Kitchen
¼ tsp. salt
4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes with juice
6 slices multigrain bread
6 Tbs. plain low-fat yogurt
Micro greens and sliced red chilies (optional)

● Place onion and garlic in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. Peel sweet potatoes, carrots and parsnip; cut into 1" pieces. Transfer vegetables to slow cooker and top with curry paste; sprinkle with salt. Add broth, 2 cups water and tomatoes with juice; stir until combined. Cover; cook on low 8 hrs. or until vegetables are tender. Let cool slightly.

● In batches, in blender, puree soup until smooth. Transfer all soup back to slow cooker; cook on low until heated through, about 15 min.

● Meanwhile, arrange bread on baking sheet; broil, flipping once, until toasted, about 1 min. per side. Ladle soup into bowls; dollop with yogurt. Serve with toasts. If desired, garnish with micro greens and chilies.

Servings: 6. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 15 min.
Calories: 240 **Protein:** 8g **Fat:** 2g (0g sat.) **Chol.:** 5mg **Carbs.:** 49g **Sodium:** 790mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 16g

PAIR IT WITH ZESTY KALE CHIPS

Coat 2 large rimmed baking sheets with cooking spray. In large bowl, toss 10 cups stemmed torn kale leaves with 1 Tbs. olive oil, ½ tsp. lemon pepper seasoning and ⅛ tsp. salt. Spread out in single layer over baking sheets. Bake at 350°F, stirring halfway through baking time, until golden and crisp, 15–20 min.

Baked Potato Soup

All the great tastes of a loaded baked potato are rolled into this creamy supper made extra delicious with diced ham

3 lbs. russet potatoes
1 onion, chopped
2 bay leaves
2 (32 oz.) conts. lower-sodium chicken broth
1 cup sour cream
1 cup chopped ham, 4 oz.
1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
¼ cup chopped chives
Smoked paprika (optional)

- Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Peel potatoes; cut into ¾" pieces. Place onion in bottom of slow cooker; top with potatoes and bay leaves. Pour 1 (32 oz.) cont. chicken broth over top. Cover; cook on low until potatoes are tender, 5 hrs. Cool slightly.

- In batches, in blender, puree potato mixture with remaining chicken broth; return all soup to slow cooker. Stir in sour cream. Reserve ¼ cup each ham and corn kernels. Add remaining ham, corn, salt and pepper to soup. Cover; cook on low until heated, about 30 min.

- Ladle soup into bowls; garnish with reserved ham, corn and chives. If desired, sprinkle with paprika.

Servings: 8. Active time: 40 min. Total time: 6 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 260 **Protein:** 10g **Fat:** 7g (4g sat.) **Chol.:** 35mg **Carbs.:** 39g **Sodium:** 440mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 5g

Hearty Beef 'n' Vegetable Stew

Mushrooms, carrots and stew meat cook up to tender perfection in this comforting meal that preps in just 20 minutes

1 (14.5 oz.) can lower-sodium beef broth
¼ cup red wine
2 Tbs. all-purpose flour
2 Tbs. tomato paste
1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme + additional sprigs
2 lbs. beef stew meat, cut into 1½" cubes
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1 Tbs. olive oil
8 oz. sliced baby bella mushrooms
4 carrots, halved lengthwise, cut into ½" slices
1 onion, chopped

- Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In medium bowl, stir together beef broth, red wine, flour, tomato paste and 1 Tbs. chopped thyme; reserve.

- Season beef all over with salt and pepper. In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. In batches, cook beef, flipping occasionally, until browned on all sides, about 5 min. per batch. Carefully transfer to plate.

- Place mushrooms, carrots and onion in bottom of slow cooker. Place beef on top of vegetables; add reserved broth mixture. Cover; cook on low 8 hrs. Transfer stew to serving bowls. Garnish with additional thyme sprigs.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 350 **Protein:** 37g **Fat:** 17g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 120mg **Carbs.:** 10g **Sodium:** 640mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 5g

NO MORE WASTED TOMATO PASTE

Your go-to stew recipe calls for just a bit of tomato paste, leaving most of the can unused. To ensure the rest doesn't go to waste, drop tablespoonfuls onto a lined baking sheet and freeze, then pop the frozen portions in a plastic bag. The paste will keep, frozen, for up to three months.

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GENIUS USE FOR KALE STEMS

Instead of discarding kale stems, try using them in pesto: Simply replace half the basil called for in your recipe with an equal amount of kale stems. Your food processor will transform them into a smooth sauce that gives basil pesto a slightly earthier flavor.

Chicken, Barley and Kale Stew

Barley adds a hint of nuttiness to this hearty main, but brown or wild rice would be just as tasty

2 carrots, peeled
2 celery ribs
1 onion
½ cup uncooked barley
1 Tbs. curry powder
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs, excess fat trimmed
2 (14.5 oz.) cans lower-sodium chicken broth
6 cups chopped stemmed kale
Chopped cilantro (optional)

- Coat bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Dice carrots and celery; chop onion. Place vegetables and barley in slow cooker. In bowl, combine curry powder, salt and pepper; sprinkle all over chicken. Nestle chicken over vegetables.

- Pour broth and 1 cup water over vegetables. Cover; cook on low, 4 hrs. Stir in kale; cover and cook until kale is tender, about 15 min.

- Transfer chicken to cutting board; let rest until cool enough to handle. Using 2 forks, shred meat. Return to pot; keep warm until ready to serve. If desired, stir in cilantro.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Sausage & Chickpea Stew: Omit barley and curry. Sub in sausage for chicken. Continue with recipe; slice sausage once cooked. Add 1 cup chickpeas with kale.

Servings: 8. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 25 min.
Calories: 180 **Protein:** 25g **Fat:** 5g (1g sat.) **Chol.:** 90mg **Carbs.:** 9g **Sodium:** 240mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 3g

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Beef Borscht

For a traditional finish, top this satisfying bowl with a generous dollop of sour cream and chopped dill

1 lb. fresh beets, trimmed
1 Tbs. oil
1 lb. beef stew meat
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
3 cloves garlic, chopped
¼ cup tomato paste
1 (14.5 oz.) can beef broth
1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes
½ (2 lb.) head cabbage, sliced
2 large carrots, cut into 1" pieces
1 large onion, chopped
1 tsp. allspice berries
2 bay leaves

- Coat hands with cooking spray (or wear kitchen gloves) to prevent staining. On large holes of box grater set over large bowl, shred beets; reserve.

- In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sprinkle beef with salt and pepper; add to skillet. Cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, 10 min. Add garlic; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 sec. Add tomato paste; cook, stirring, until lightly browned, about 2 min. Add broth, scraping up any bits from bottom of skillet.

- Transfer mixture to slow cooker. Add tomatoes, beets, cabbage, carrots, onion, allspice and bay leaves. Cover; cook on high until meat and vegetables are tender, 4 hrs.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 310 **Protein:** 22g **Fat:** 17g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 60mg **Carbs.:** 20g **Sodium:** 950mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 11g

Hearty Ratatouille

Colorful squash and peppers are cooked to tender perfection in this garlicky-good tomato stew

- **1 (14 oz.) can crushed tomatoes**
- **3 Tbs. tomato paste**
- **1 (1 lb.) eggplant**
- **1 (8 oz.) zucchini**
- **1 (8 oz.) yellow squash**
- **1 red pepper**
- **2 cloves garlic**
- **1 tsp. dried Italian seasoning**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
- **Fresh thyme leaves (optional)**

● Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In bowl, combine crushed tomatoes and tomato paste; reserve. Trim eggplant, zucchini and squash; cut into ¾" pieces. Halve pepper; remove seeds. Cut into ¾" pieces. Mince garlic.

● Place eggplant, zucchini, squash and red pepper in bottom of slow cooker. Add garlic, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper and reserved tomato mixture to slow cooker; toss until combined. Cover; cook on low until vegetables are tender, 3–3½ hrs. Stir in balsamic vinegar. If desired, garnish with fresh thyme.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Chicken 'n' Eggplant Stew: Omit the zucchini and yellow squash. Sub in 1 lb. skinless boneless chicken thighs (cut into 2" pieces). Add to slow cooker with eggplant. Continue with recipe.

Servings: 8. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 25 min.

Calories: 70 **Protein:** 4g **Fat:** 0g **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 14g **Sodium:** 360mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 9g

PAIR IT WITH HERBED GARLIC BREAD

In small bowl, stir together 2 Tbs. chopped fresh basil, 1 Tbs. grated Parmesan and 1 clove garlic (minced) into ¼ cup melted salted butter. Brush over 16 slices crusty French bread. If desired, arrange in single layer on baking sheet and broil until lightly toasted, about 2 min.

Butternut Squash Soup

Cayenne-kissed pumpkin seeds add a slightly spicy crunch to top this simply satisfying bowl of yum

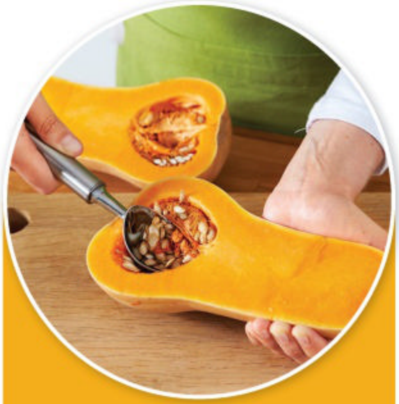
1 small onion, chopped
6 cups cubed, peeled butternut squash, about 1½ lbs.
1 apple, peeled, cored, cut into 1" pieces
1 tsp. dried sage
3 cups lower-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
⅓ cup heavy cream
2 tsp. grated peeled ginger
¼ tsp. + ⅛ tsp. salt
1 Tbs. olive oil
¼ cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
¼ tsp. ground cumin
⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper
Sour cream (optional)

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Place onion, squash, apple and dried sage in bottom of slow cooker. Pour broth over top. Cover; cook on low 8 hrs. Let cool slightly.

● In batches, in blender, process squash mixture until smooth. Return all soup to slow cooker. Stir in cream, ginger and ¼ tsp. salt. Cook on low until heated through, about 30 min.

● Meanwhile, in skillet, heat oil over medium heat; add pepitas, cumin, remaining salt and cayenne. Cook, stirring, until lightly toasted and fragrant, about 5 min. Transfer to bowl; cool. Divide soup among bowls; top with spiced pepitas. If desired, garnish with sour cream.

Servings: 4. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 280 **Protein:** 8g **Fat:** 15g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 25mg **Carbs.:** 35g **Sodium:** 670mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 11g



SECRET TO SEED A SQUASH—FAST

You love butternut squash but could do without the tedious task of seeding it. For easier prep, use an ice-cream scoop: Its sharp edge cuts right through the squash's fibrous strings, and its deep bowl removes plenty of seeds in a single swipe. Your squash will be ready to cook in no time.

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Chicken, Tomato and Olive Stew

Meaty chicken pieces braise to falling-off-the-bone deliciousness in our fennel-infused tomato sauce

4 lbs. bone-in chicken pieces, breast pieces halved
¾ tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
½ cup all-purpose flour
2 Tbs. olive oil
1 onion, thinly sliced
3 cloves garlic, halved
1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce
2 Tbs. tomato paste
1 tsp. fennel seeds, crushed
⅓ cup drained pitted Kalamata olives
1 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley

- Rub chicken with salt and pepper. Place flour in large bowl; in batches, add chicken pieces and toss in flour until completely coated. In 12" nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. In 2 batches, add chicken; cook, flipping occasionally, until browned on all sides.

- Place onion and garlic in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. In bowl, stir together tomato sauce, tomato paste and fennel seeds; pour over onion. Top with chicken. Cover; cook on low until chicken is no longer pink near bones, 3–3½ hrs., adding olives during last 15 min. of cooking time. Transfer chicken to serving platter. Skim and discard fat from sauce in slow cooker; spoon sauce over chicken. Sprinkle with parsley.

Servings: 6. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 4 hrs.
Calories: 445 **Protein:** 41g **Fat:** 26g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 127mg **Carbs.:** 10g **Sodium:** 698mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 3g

PRO TRICK TO CRUSH SEEDS EASILY

Before adding seeds like fennel, cumin and coriander to a dish, it's key to crush them to bring out their subtle flavor. Trouble is, pounding the hard exterior tends to send them scattering all over. Next time, place seeds in a plastic freezer bag then lightly pound with a rolling pin until finely crushed.

Mexican Bean Soup

Hominy is the secret ingredient in our stick-to-your-ribs main, but chickpeas or butter beans would be just as good

1 (14.5 oz.) can lower-sodium beef broth
1 (10 oz.) can diced tomatoes with mild green chilies
2 Tbs. tomato paste
2 carrots, chopped
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 bay leaf
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 (15.5 oz.) can mixed chili beans, undrained
1 (15 oz.) can white hominy, drained

● In 4-qt. slow cooker combine beef broth, diced tomatoes with chilies and tomato paste; stir in carrots, onion, garlic, bay leaf and cumin.

● Cover; cook on low until vegetables are tender, 5 hrs. Stir in beans with liquid and hominy. Cook on low until flavors blend, about 1 hr. If desired, garnish with cilantro.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Beef 'n' Bean Soup: Omit the hominy. In nonstick skillet, heat 2 Tbs. oil over medium-high heat; add 1 lb. beef stew meat. Cook, flipping, until browned on all sides, about 5 min. Add to slow cooker with carrots, onion and garlic. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 4. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 6 hrs., 15 min.
Calories: 201 **Protein:** 10g **Fat:** 1g (0g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 38g **Sodium:** 877mg **Fiber:** 11g **Sugar:** 6g

PAIR IT WITH CHEESY CORN BREAD

Line 8" square baking pan with foil; grease. In bowl, mix 1 (8.5 oz.) pkg. corn muffin mix, ⅓ cup milk and 1 egg; stir in 1 (8.5 oz.) can creamed corn, 1 cup shredded cheddar and 3 chopped scallions. Transfer to pan; sprinkle with ½ cup cherry tomatoes (quartered). Bake at 400°F, 25 min.

Chicken and Dumpling Stew

Convenient baking mix makes it a snap to whip up the pillowy dumplings made even more tasty with Parmesan

3	**Yukon Gold potatoes, 1 lb.**
3	**carrots**
2	**leeks**
2	**lbs. boneless chicken thighs**
¼	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
2½	**cups lower-sodium chicken broth**
¼	**cup all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp. crushed dried rosemary**
1	**cup pancake and baking mix, such as Bisquick**
2	**Tbs. grated Parmesan**
⅓	**cup milk**
½	**cup frozen peas, thawed, drained**

● Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Peel potatoes; cut into 8 pieces each. Halve carrots lengthwise; cut diagonally into ¼"-wide slices. Trim dark green parts of leeks; discard. Halve white and light green parts of leeks lengthwise; cut into ½" wide slices. Trim excess fat from chicken thighs; cut into 1½" pieces. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper.

● In medium bowl, combine chicken broth, flour and rosemary. Place potatoes, carrots and leeks in bottom of slow cooker. Top with chicken. Pour broth mixture on top. Cover; cook on low 5 hrs.

● In medium bowl, combine baking mix and Parmesan; stir in milk until just combined. Add peas to chicken mixture in slow cooker. Drop dumpling mixture by heaping tablespoons over chicken mixture. Cover; cook on high until dumplings are cooked through and chicken is no longer pink in centers, about 30 min.

Servings: 6. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 6 hrs.
Calories: 370 **Protein:** 36g **Fat:** 8g (2g sat.) **Chol.:** 125mg **Carbs.:** 39g **Sodium:** 570mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 5g

Turkey Meatball and Veggie Soup

Breadcrumbs and dill stirred into the meat ensure these balls turn out extra moist and flavorful

3	**thin carrots**
1	**small rutabaga, 12 oz.**
1	**egg**
1	**lb. ground turkey**
⅓	**cup Italian-style dry breadcrumbs**
2	**Tbs. chopped fresh dill**
1	**clove garlic, minced**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
6	**cups lower-sodium chicken broth**
2	**tsp. fennel seeds, finely crushed**
3	**scallions, thinly sliced**

● Line rimmed baking sheet with wax paper. Cut carrots into ⅛"-thick round slices. Peel rutabaga;

cut into ¾" pieces. Place carrots and rutabaga in bottom of 5-qt. slow cooker. Place egg in medium bowl; lightly beat. Add ground turkey, breadcrumbs, dill, garlic and pepper; using fingers, gently mix until just combined. Divide mixture into 24 portions. Shape into balls; place on baking sheet.

● Coat large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium heat. In 2 batches, cook meatballs, turning occasionally, until lightly browned all over, about 5 min. per batch. Transfer meatballs to slow cooker. In large bowl, combine broth and crushed fennel seeds; pour on top of meatballs. Cover; cook on low 4½ hrs. until vegetables are tender. Garnish with sliced scallions.

Servings: 6. Active time: 40 min. Total time: 5 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 200 **Protein:** 19g **Fat:** 7g (2g sat.) **Chol.:** 85mg **Carbs.:** 16g **Sodium:** 430mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 7g

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Beef & Barley Soup

Nutrient-rich barley comes together with fall-apart tender stew meat and a medley of root vegetables

1	**Tbs. olive oil**
1½	**lbs. beef stew meat, cut into ¾" pieces**
¼	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
2	**carrots, cut into ½" pieces**
1	**parsnip, cut into ½" pieces**
1	**cup ½" diced butternut squash**
8	**cups lower-sodium beef broth**
1	**tsp. dried thyme**
½	**cup pearl barley**
½	**cup frozen peas, thawed**
	Fresh thyme sprigs (optional)

● In nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Season beef with salt and pepper; in two batches, cook, flipping occasionally, until browned all over, about 5 min. per batch. Remove from heat.

● Place carrots, parsnips and squash in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. Top with beef. In large bowl, combine broth and thyme. Pour on top. Cover; cook on low 4 hrs.

● Stir in barley. Cover; cook until barley and beef are tender, about 1 hr., adding peas during last 15 min. of cooking time. If desired, garnish with fresh thyme sprigs.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Chicken and Rice Soup: Sub in boneless, skinless chicken thighs (cut into 1½" pieces) for the beef and brown rice for the barley. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 6. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 5 hr., 30 min.
Calories: 278 **Protein:** 31g **Fat:** 8g (3g sat.) **Chol.:** 73mg **Carbs.:** 22g **Sodium:** 717mg **Fiber:** 5g **Sugar:** 3g

Chunky Tortilla Soup

Loaded with black beans, chicken and vegetables, this warming delight would be even heartier with white rice stirred in

- **1 red pepper**
- **1 large onion**
- **1 (1 qt.) cont. chicken broth**
- **1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes**
- **2 Tbs. chili powder**
- **2 cloves garlic, minced**
- **2 tsp. ground cumin**
- **1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs**
- **1 (15.5 oz.) can black beans, rinsed, drained**
- **¾ cup frozen corn kernels, thawed**
- **3 Tbs. fresh lime juice**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **Diced avocado, tortilla chips and cilantro leaves (optional)**

● Seed and chop pepper; chop onion. Transfer to bottom of 5–7 qt. slow cooker. In large bowl, combine chicken broth, tomatoes with their juice, 1 cup water, chili powder, garlic and cumin.

● Place chicken on top of vegetables in slow cooker. Top with broth mixture. Cover; cook on low until chicken is cooked through, 7–8 hrs., adding beans and corn during last 1 hr. of cooking time.

● Transfer chicken to bowl. Using 2 forks, shred meat; return to slow cooker. Stir in lime juice, salt and pepper. If desired, garnish with avocado, tortilla chips and cilantro.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min.
Total time: 8 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 220 **Protein:** 25g **Fat:** 4g (1g sat.)
Chol.: 65mg **Carbs.:** 23g **Sodium:** 840mg
Fiber: 7g **Sugar:** 6g

Chicken Chili

This spiced-just-right dish comes together in 15 minutes, then slow cooks for deep, smoky flavor

- **1 Tbs. oil**
- **1½ lbs. ground chicken**
- **1 large onion, chopped**
- **3 cloves garlic, chopped**
- **3 Tbs. chili powder**
- **1 Tbs. smoked paprika**
- **¼ cup tomato paste**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **1 cup lower-sodium chicken broth**
- **1 (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes**
- **1 (12 oz.) pkg. frozen corn, thawed, drained**
- **1 (14.5 oz.) can black beans, rinsed, drained**
- **1 (14.5 oz.) can pinto beans, rinsed, drained**
- **Lime wedges and chopped fresh cilantro (optional)**

● In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken and onion; cook, breaking up chicken with spoon, until browned, about 4 min. Add garlic, chili powder and paprika; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 sec. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring, until slightly browned, about 2 min. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add broth scraping up any browned bits from bottom of skillet.

● Transfer mixture to slow cooker. Add diced tomatoes with juice and corn. Cover; cook on high 2 hrs. Add beans; cover and cook until slightly thickened, about 1 hr. If desired, serve with lime wedges and chopped fresh cilantro.

Servings: 8. Active time: 15 min.
Total time: 3 hrs., 15 min.
Calories: 230 **Protein:** 18g **Fat:** 10g (0g sat.) **Chol.:** 40mg **Carbs.:** 17g **Sodium:** 560mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 4g

TOP IT WITH A DOLLOP OF CILANTRO-LIME CREMA

In food processor, process ½ cup sour cream, ½ pitted, peeled avocado, ½ cup water, ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, 3 Tbs. lime juice, 1 Tbs. chopped cilantro, ½ tsp. green Tabasco, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper until creamy.

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Mains & Sides

From simply satisfying weeknight suppers to company-special dinners, this recipe collection is chock-full of meals that are perfect for any occasion. And our slow-cooker spins on everything from meatloaf to mac 'n' cheese to tacos make it easy and stress-free to serve up all your favorites

Chicken & Andouille Jambalaya

This set-it-and-forget-it twist on a celebrated Louisiana favorite is guaranteed to satisfy hungry appetites

3	**links andouille sausage**
1½	**lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs**
½	**tsp. Cajun seasoning**
1	**onion, chopped**
1	**(14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes**
1	**cup lower-sodium chicken broth**
3	**cups uncooked instant rice, such as Minute Rice**
	Parsley leaves (optional)

- Coat 4-qt. slow cooker and 12" nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Cut sausage into ¼"-thick slices. Trim excess fat from chicken; cut into 1½" pieces.

- Heat skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage; cook, turning occasionally, until browned, about 5 min. Transfer to plate; reserve. Sprinkle chicken all over with Cajun seasoning. In batches, in same skillet, cook chicken, flipping occasionally, until browned, 5–6 min. per batch.

- Place onion in slow cooker; top with chicken, sausage, tomatoes and broth. Cover; cook on low 4 hrs. Stir in rice. Cover; cook until heated through, 10–15 min. If desired, garnish with parsley leaves.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Shrimp & Andouille Jambalaya: Omit chicken. Add 1½ lbs. peeled, deveined shrimp during last 30 min., adding rice after shrimp cooks. Continue with recipe.

Servings: 6. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 50 min.
Calories: 340 **Protein:** 33g **Fat:** 10g (3g sat.) **Chol.:** 115mg **Carbs.:** 29g **Sodium:** 600mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 4g

Beef Casserole with Cheddar Biscuits

Meaty mushrooms give this dinner winner an extra layer of savory flavor

3	**lbs. beef stew meat**
2⅓	**cups all-purpose flour**
¼	**cup olive oil**
4	**strips bacon, cut into pieces**
8	**oz. mushrooms, quartered**
1	**onion, peeled, finely chopped**
2½	**cups beef broth**
½	**cup red wine**
2	**Tbs. steak sauce**
2	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. salt**
½	**tsp. baking soda**
½	**cup butter, cut into small pieces**
1	**cup shredded cheddar**
¼	**cup chopped parsley**
¾	**cup milk**

- In bowl, mix beef and ⅓ cup flour; toss to coat. In nonstick skillet, heat 2 Tbs. olive oil over medium heat. Cook half of the beef, flipping, until browned on all sides, 6–8 min. Repeat with remaining oil and beef. Transfer to 6-qt. slow cooker.

- In same skillet, add bacon, mushrooms and onion; cook, stirring, until onions are tender, 8–10 min. Add broth, wine and sauce; bring to boil. Transfer to slow cooker. Cover; cook on low until meat is tender, 7–8 hrs. Transfer to shallow baking dish.

- Heat oven to 400°F. In bowl, mix remaining flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda; cut in butter until coarse crumbs form. Stir in cheddar and parsley, then milk. Drop by 2 Tbs. scoops over stew. Bake until biscuits are golden, 14–16 min.

Servings: 8. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 7 hrs., 45 min.
Calories: 620 **Protein:** 51g **Fat:** 29g (8g sat.) **Chol.:** 130mg **Carbs.:** 39g **Sodium:** 900mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 5g

EASY TRICK TO FLAKY BISCUITS

The secret to perfect piecrust, biscuits and scones? Instead of using a pastry blender to cut cold butter into the flour, use the large holes of a box grater. Simply freeze the pre-measured amount of butter for 30 minutes before grating. The result: deliciously tender baked goods.

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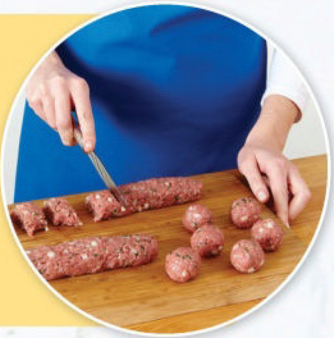
Angles; Food & Photo

PRO TIP TO SHAPING MEATBALLS

Your meatballs earn rave reviews, but prep takes a bit longer than you'd like because it takes time to shape the balls into the same size so they cook evenly. To cut prep time in half: Roll the uncooked meat mixture into logs and cut each log into equal slices, then roll each slice into a ball. Cook as recipe directs.



Mozzarella-Stuffed Meatballs

Delight everyone when they bite into these tender meatballs to find an ooey-gooey surprise inside

- **3 oz. mozzarella**
- **1½ lbs. ground beef and/or pork**
- **½ cup Italian-style dry breadcrumbs**
- **¼ cup chopped fresh basil + additional leaves for garnish**
- **2 eggs**
- **2 cloves garlic, minced**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **1½ cups tomato-basil pasta sauce**
- **1 cup cherry tomatoes**
- **12 oz. spaghetti**
- **Finely shredded Parmesan cheese (optional)**

● Cut cheese into 18 cubes. In large bowl, combine beef, pork, breadcrumbs, chopped basil, eggs, garlic, salt and pepper; gently mix until just blended. Divide mixture into 18 portions; place 1 cube of cheese in center of each. Shape meat mixture into balls around mozzarella.

● Place ½ cup sauce in bottom of 4-qt. slow cooker. Place meatballs on top; pour remaining sauce over. Cover; cook on low 2½ hrs. Add cherry tomatoes; cook until tomatoes are softened, 1 hr.

● In pot of salted boiling water, cook pasta according to package directions for al dente; drain. Spoon ½ cup sauce in serving bowl. Add pasta; pour remaining sauce with meatballs over. If desired, sprinkle with Parmesan and additional basil.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 4 hrs.
Calories: 558 **Protein:** 39g **Fat:** 19g (7g sat.) **Chol.:** 147mg **Carbs.:** 55g **Sodium:** 706mg **Fiber:** 5g **Sugar:** 5g

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Beef with Mushrooms

Serve this hearty dish over mashed potatoes or creamy polenta for an extra layer of comforting mmm

- **1¼ cups lower-sodium beef broth**
- **¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- **2 Tbs. tomato paste**
- **2½ lbs. beef stew meat, cut into 1¼" pieces**
- **1 tsp. garlic powder**
- **2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper**
- **1 onion, chopped**
- **1 (8 oz.) pkg. baby bella mushrooms, trimmed, sliced**
- **1 (3.5 oz.) pkg. shiitake mushrooms, trimmed, sliced**
- **3 slices bacon, diced**
- **½ cup red wine**

● In bowl, whisk broth, flour and tomato paste. In separate bowl, toss beef with garlic powder, thyme, salt, pepper and cayenne.

● Place onion and mushrooms in 6-qt. slow cooker. Coat large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium heat. Add bacon; cook, stirring often, until crisp, 8–10 min. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to slow cooker. Discard all but 2 Tbs. fat from skillet. Heat over high heat. In batches, add beef; cook, flipping, until browned, 4–5 min. per batch. Transfer beef to slow cooker. Add wine to skillet; stir up browned bits in pan. Add to broth mixture; pour over beef in slow cooker. Cover; cook on low until beef is tender, 6–7 hrs. If desired, garnish with additional thyme sprigs.

Servings: 8. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 6 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 460 **Protein:** 47g **Fat:** 23g (9g sat.) **Chol.:** 155mg **Carbs.:** 10g **Sodium:** 840mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 3g

Fiesta Salad–Topped Meatloaf

We replaced breadcrumbs with crushed tortilla chips in this nachos-inspired spin on a weeknight winner

2½	**lbs. ground beef**
10	**cups Mexican-style tortilla chips, finely ground, about 5 oz., from 11-oz. bag**
1	**cup frozen corn, thawed, drained**
1	**cup salsa**
3	**eggs**
1	**cup shredded pepper Jack cheese, 4 oz.**
1	**avocado, pitted, peeled, cubed**
1	**cup cherry tomatoes, quartered**
1	**cup fresh cilantro leaves**
½	**cup chopped red onion**
1	**Tbs. lime juice**
	Sour cream and lime wedges (optional)

● Line 4-qt. slow cooker (preferably round) with slow-cooker liner allowing excess to hang over side. In bowl, combine beef, tortilla chips, corn, salsa and eggs; press into bottom of slow cooker. Cover; cook on low until cooked through or meat thermometer inserted into center reaches 165°F, about 4½ hrs.

● Using paper towels, pat top of meatloaf dry. Top with cheese; cook until melted, 10 min. Using slow-cooker bag, carefully lift out meatloaf; transfer to platter. In bowl, mix avocado, tomatoes, cilantro, onion and juice. Top meatloaf with avocado mixture. If desired, drizzle with sour cream and serve with limes.

Servings: 8. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 5 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 574 **Protein:** 35g **Fat:** 36g (12g sat.) **Chol.:** 179mg **Carbs.:** 27g **Sodium:** 523mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 4g

PAIR IT WITH ROASTED POTATOES & SHALLOTS

Line large rimmed baking sheet with foil; coat with cooking spray. Add 2 lbs. baby potatoes (halved), 4 shallots (quartered), 3 Tbs. oil, 1 tsp. dried rosemary, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper; spread out in single layer. Roast at 375°F, stirring once halfway through, until golden-brown and tender, about 30 min.

Chicken Cacciatore

A dash of balsamic vinegar adds richness to this saucy Italian classic brimming with peppers and onions

2	**red and/or green peppers**
1	**onion**
2	**cloves garlic**
3	**lbs. chicken thighs and legs, skin removed**
¼	**cup all-purpose flour**
1	**(8 oz.) can tomato sauce**
2	**Tbs. tomato paste**
1	**Tbs. balsamic vinegar**
1	**tsp. dried Italian seasoning**
½	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
8	**oz. bowtie pasta**
¼	**cup drained rinsed capers**

Fresh parsley leaves (optional)

- Slice peppers, onion and garlic. Place in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. In large bowl, toss chicken pieces with flour to coat, shaking off and reserving excess flour. Place chicken over vegetables.

- Stir together tomato sauce, tomato paste, vinegar, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper and reserved flour; spoon over chicken. Cover; cook on low until tender, 5–6 hrs.

- In large pot of salted boiling water, cook pasta according to package directions for al dente; drain well. Transfer to platter.

- Skim and discard fat from juices in slow cooker. Stir capers into chicken mixture; serve over pasta. If desired, garnish with parsley.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 6 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 470 **Protein:** 53g **Fat:** 9g (2g sat.) **Chol.:** 180mg **Carbs.:** 42g **Sodium:** 600mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 7g

SEED BELL PEPPERS LIKE A PRO

Removing the seeds and core from peppers can be messy. The fix: Cut off the pepper top and bottom, then make a vertical slice down one side. Next, run your knife parallel to the flesh along the inside edge while rolling the pepper in the direction the knife is moving. The seeds, core and ribs will come off in one piece.

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Food & Photo (3)

Shredded Spiced Beef Tacos

Dark brown sugar stirred into the cooking liquid ensures the meat cooks up extra rich and flavorful

1	**tsp. garlic powder**
1	**tsp. ground cumin**
½	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
¼	**tsp. cayenne pepper**
2½	**lbs. beef bottom round roast**
1	**onion, chopped**
¼	**cup all-purpose flour**
¼	**cup packed dark brown sugar**
1	**cup Heinz 57 sauce**
¼	**cup white vinegar**
2	**cups torn lettuce leaves**
20	**taco shells, from 2 (4.6 oz.) pkgs.**
1	**cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese**
½	**cup sliced red onion**
	Sliced chili peppers, cilantro leaves and limes (optional)

- In small bowl, combine garlic powder, ground cumin, salt, pepper and cayenne. Rub all over beef. Place onion in bottom of 4-qt. slow cooker. Place beef on top. In bowl, combine flour and brown sugar. Add Heinz 57 sauce and vinegar; stir until combined. Pour over beef. Cover; cook on high until beef is very tender, 6–7 hrs.

- Transfer beef to bowl. Using 2 forks, shred meat. Skim fat from liquid in slow cooker. Add enough liquid to beef to moisten, about 1 cup. Place lettuce in bottom of taco shells. Top with beef, cheese and onion. If desired, top with peppers and cilantro and serve with limes.

Servings: 10. Active time: 40 min.
Total time: 7 hrs., 40 min.
Calories: 400 **Protein:** 29g **Fat:** 17g (5g sat.)
Chol.: 75mg **Carbs.:** 30g **Sodium:** 510mg
Fiber: 2g **Sugar:** 13g

PAIR IT WITH PICKLED ONIONS
Place 1 cup thinly sliced red onion in heatproof jar with lid. In pot, combine 1 cup vinegar, ½ cup water, 2 Tbs. sugar, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. mustard seeds and 1 tsp. peppercorns; over medium heat, cook until sugar dissolves. Pour over onions. Cover; chill at least 4 hrs.

Tangy Spareribs

Our from-scratch barbecue sauce starts with a handful of ingredients and cooks up in just 5 minutes

1 onion, chopped
2 tsp. smoked paprika
2 tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. salt
4 lbs. spareribs cut into 4–5 rib sections
1½ cups ketchup
¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
¼ cup unseasoned rice vinegar
1 Tbs. less-sodium soy sauce
1 tsp. grated, peeled fresh ginger
Sliced scallions (optional)

● Place onion in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. In small bowl, combine paprika, garlic powder and salt. Rub over both sides of ribs. In separate small bowl, combine ketchup, brown sugar and vinegar; spread ½ cup sauce mixture over ribs. Reserve remaining sauce; chill.

● Place ribs in slow cooker; cover. Cook on low until tender, about 8 hrs. Line rimmed baking sheet with foil. Using wide spatula, transfer ribs to baking sheet.

● Skim and discard fat from liquid in slow cooker. Transfer liquid to small pot and stir in reserved sauce, soy sauce and ginger. Over medium heat, cook, stirring occasionally, until flavors blend and liquid is slightly reduced, 5–7 min. Brush ¼ cup sauce over ribs. Heat broiler. Broil ribs until lightly browned, 2–3 min. Serve with remaining sauce. If desired, garnish with scallions.

Servings: 6. Active time: 15 min.
Total time: 8 hrs., 15 min.
Calories: 710 **Protein:** 34g **Fat:** 50g (16g sat.) **Chol.:** 170mg **Carbs.:** 32g **Sodium:** 1,100mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 26g

Lines + Angles; Adobe Stock

Short Ribs with Celery Root Mash

Tender ribs and creamy veggie puree set the stage for a meal that satisfies hungry appetites

- **2 lbs. bone-in beef short ribs, 2"x2" pieces**
- **½ tsp. + ¼ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. + ⅛ tsp. pepper**
- **7 cloves garlic**
- **½ cup balsamic vinegar**
- **2 jalapeño peppers, seeded, sliced**
- **2 Tbs. Dijon mustard**
- **2 lemons, zested**
- **3 large red onions, peeled, halved**
- **1 celery root, peeled, diced**
- **1 (13.5 oz.) can light coconut milk**

● Rub ribs with ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Coat large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over high heat. In 2 batches, cook ribs until browned, about 5 min. per batch. Thinly slice 6 cloves garlic.

● In 6-qt. slow cooker, combine 2 cups water, balsamic vinegar, sliced garlic, jalapeño pepper, mustard and lemon zest. Add ribs; spread out in single layer. Cover; cook on high 4 hrs. or until meat is tender when pierced with fork.

● Transfer meat to casserole dish; cover. Pour cooking liquid into gravy strainer; skim fat. Reserve fat. Place cooking liquid in medium pot. Over medium-high heat, bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, uncovered, until thickened slightly and reduced to about 1 cup, 18–20 min. Reserve.

● Heat oven to 400°F. On large rimmed baking sheet, toss onions with reserved fat. Arrange cut side down on baking sheet. Roast until cut sides are browned, about 15 min. Turn onions over; roast until tender, about 5 min. Tent with foil.

● Slice remaining clove garlic. In pot, combine celery root, coconut milk, 1 cup water and garlic; bring to boil. Over medium heat, cook, stirring occasionally, until very tender, 25–30 min. Drain celery root, reserving cooking liquid. In batches, in food processor or blender, puree celery root. If mixture is too thick, add cooking liquid a few tablespoons at a time until desired consistency. Sprinkle with remaining salt and pepper. Serve ribs over celery root puree, with roasted onions and reserved gravy.

Servings: 6. Active time: 1 hr.
Total time: 5 hrs.
Calories: 409 **Protein:** 15g **Fat:** 31g (15g sat.) **Chol.:** 57mg **Carbs.:** 15g **Sodium:** 467mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 5g

Teriyaki Pork with Pineapple Salsa

We jazzed up store-bought marinade with ginger and lime to create the glaze on this moist tenderloin

¾ cup teriyaki marinade and sauce, such as Kikkoman
3 Tbs. fresh lime juice
1 Tbs. grated, peeled fresh ginger
3 tsp. minced garlic
1 Tbs. five spice powder
1 large yellow onion, sliced
2 (1 lb.) pork tenderloins, trimmed
2 cups diced, peeled fresh pineapple
1 serrano pepper, minced
2 Tbs. minced red onion
⅛ cup minced fresh cilantro

● In medium bowl, combine teriyaki sauce, 2 Tbs. lime juice, ginger, 2 tsp. garlic and spice powder; reserve ¼ cup mixture. Place yellow onion in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. Arrange pork over onion; pour remaining teriyaki mixture over pork. Cover and cook on low until meat thermometer inserted into thickest part of pork registers 145°F, 3–4 hrs.

● Meanwhile, in medium bowl, combine pineapple, serrano pepper, red onion, cilantro, remaining 1 Tbs. lime juice and 1 tsp. minced garlic; toss until evenly coated.

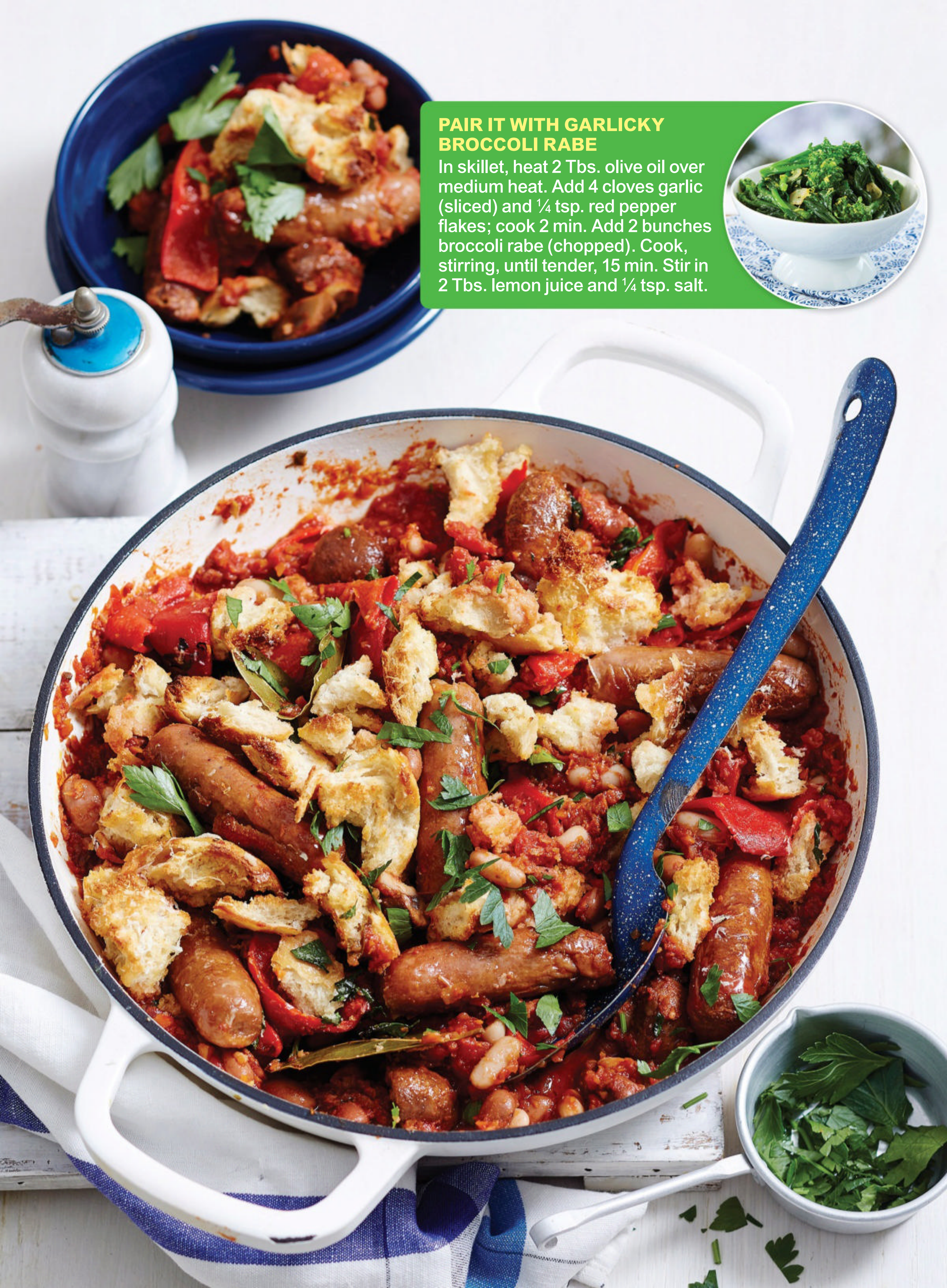
● Transfer pork to serving platter; brush with reserved teriyaki mixture. Serve with pineapple salsa.

Servings: 6. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 25 min.
Calories: 220 **Protein:** 33g **Fat:** 4g (1g sat.) **Chol.:** 100mg **Carbs.:** 13g **Sodium:** 520mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 9g

PAIR IT WITH CUCUMBER SALAD

Slice 2 seedless cucumbers into ribbons. Place on paper towels; pat dry. In bowl, combine 1½ Tbs. canola oil, 3 Tbs. seasoned rice vinegar and pinch cayenne. Add cucumbers, 2 scallions (minced) and 2 tsp. sesame seeds; gently toss until coated. Garnish with 3 Tbs. chopped salted peanuts and 2 Tbs. chopped cilantro.

Food & Photo (3)



PAIR IT WITH GARLICKY BROCCOLI RABE

In skillet, heat 2 Tbs. olive oil over medium heat. Add 4 cloves garlic (sliced) and ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes; cook 2 min. Add 2 bunches broccoli rabe (chopped). Cook, stirring, until tender, 15 min. Stir in 2 Tbs. lemon juice and ¼ tsp. salt.

Sausage Casserole

Easy from-scratch Parmesan croutons give this dish delicious crunch

2	**Tbs. olive oil**
1	**lb. sweet Italian sausage**
1	**red onion, chopped**
8	**oz. mushrooms, quartered**
1	**red pepper, chopped**
2	**strips bacon, cut into 1" pieces**
1	**clove garlic, minced**
2	**bay leaves**
1	**Tbs. chopped sage leaves**
½	**cup red wine**
2	**(14.5 oz.) cans diced tomatoes with herbs**
1	**(14.5 oz.) can cannellini beans, rinsed, drained**
2	**slices sourdough bread, torn**
2	**Tbs. grated Parmesan cheese**
¼	**tsp. salt**
2	**Tbs. roughly chopped parsley**

● In pot, heat 1 Tbs. oil over medium heat; add sausage. Cook, rotating occasionally, until browned, 6–8 min. Place in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker.

● In same pot, combine next 7 ingredients; cook, stirring, until starting to soften, 6–8 min. Add wine; cook until liquid is reduced by half, 2–3 min. Transfer to slow cooker. Add tomatoes; cover. Cook on high until sausage is cooked through, 1½–2 hrs. Add beans; cover. Cook 30 min.

● Heat oven to 425°F. On rimmed baking sheet, toss bread, Parmesan, salt and remaining oil until coated. Bake until golden 10–12 min. Top sausage mixture with croutons. Sprinkle with parsley.

Servings: 6. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 2 hrs.
Calories: 420 **Protein:** 23g **Fat:** 20g (5g sat.) **Chol.:** 30mg **Carbs.:** 34g **Sodium:** 920mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 6g

Are Media (2); Food & Photo

Mediterranean Stuffed Peppers

Cinnamon and raisins transform ordinary ground beef into an extra-irresistible filling for bell peppers

4	**red peppers**
½	**cup slivered almonds, toasted**
1	**lb. ground beef**
1	**onion, chopped**
½	**cup raisins**
4	**Tbs. chopped fresh parsley**
2	**Tbs. tomato paste**
2	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
¼	**tsp. salt**
¼	**tsp. pepper**

● Slice ¾" from pepper tops; remove seeds from peppers. Reserve pepper tops. Reserve 1 Tbs. almonds; chop remaining almonds. Coat nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium-high heat. Add beef and onion; cook, stirring and breaking up beef with spoon, until no longer pink, 8–10 min. Drain and discard pan drippings. Stir in chopped almonds, raisins, 3 Tbs. parsley, tomato paste, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Fill peppers with meat mixture; add pepper tops.

● Pour ½ cup water in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker; add peppers. Cover; cook on low until peppers are tender, 2 hrs. Top with remaining almonds and parsley.

EASY VARIATION

Make 'em Tex-Mex Peppers: Omit almonds and cinnamon. Sub in cooked white rice for raisins. Add ½ cup grated cheddar. Continue with recipe. Top cooked peppers with salsa and chopped avocado.

Servings: 4. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 25 min.
Calories: 393 **Protein:** 26g **Fat:** 19g (5g sat.) **Chol.:** 67mg **Carbs.:** 32g **Sodium:** 227 **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 20g

Macaroni and Cheese

Elbow pasta has the perfect shape for holding our creamy sauce—you can sub in other shapes like shells or cavatappi

1 lb. shredded extra-sharp white cheddar cheese
8 oz. reduced-fat (2%) Velveeta
3½ cups reduced-fat (2%) milk
1 (12 oz.) can low-fat evaporated milk
1 Tbs. spicy brown mustard
1 tsp. salt
⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper
1 lb. elbow macaroni
½ cup finely shredded Parmesan
2 Tbs. chopped fresh chives
Cracked black pepper (optional)

● In small bowl, reserve ½ cup cheddar. Cut Velveeta into ½" chunks. Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Stir in milk, evaporated milk, mustard, salt and cayenne pepper. Fold in macaroni, Velveeta chunks and remaining cheddar cheese.

● Cover; cook on low 2 hrs. Transfer to serving bowls. Top with reserved cheddar, Parmesan and chives. If desired, sprinkle with pepper.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Buffalo Chicken Mac and Cheese: Sub in 1 (8 oz.) pkg. low-fat cream cheese for the Velveeta. Add 2 cups shredded chicken, ½ cup crumbled blue cheese, ⅓ cup Frank's buffalo sauce and 1 Tbs. tomato paste to crock with remaining ingredients; continue with recipe.

Servings: 8. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 4 hrs.
Calories: 530 **Protein:** 33g **Fat:** 20g (11g sat.) **Chol.:** 65mg **Carbs.:** 57g **Sodium:** 970mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 14g

Chili-Glazed Meatloaf

Just a handful of everyday ingredients and a few minutes are all it takes to get this hearty comfort food favorite ready to cook

2 eggs
1½ lbs. lean ground beef
½ cup Italian-style dry breadcrumbs
⅔ cup chili sauce
1 small onion, grated
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ tsp. pepper

● Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray; line with parchment paper round. In large bowl, beat eggs. Add ground beef, breadcrumbs, ⅓ cup chili sauce, onion, garlic and pepper. Using hands, mix until blended.

● Shape meat mixture into loaf; transfer to slow cooker. Spread remaining ⅓ cup chili sauce on top. Cover; cook on low until meat is cooked through and no longer pink in center, 1½–3 hrs. Transfer meatloaf to platter. Let stand 15 min.

EASY VARIATIONS

Make it BBQ Chicken Meatloaf: Swap in ground chicken for beef and bbq sauce for the chili sauce. Add ¾ cup shredded cheddar and 1 tsp. garlic powder to meat mixture. Continue with recipe as directed.

Make it Tomato-Bacon Meatloaf: Omit chili sauce and onion. Mix eggs, beef, breadcrumbs, ¼ cup bacon bits, ½ cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes and pepper. Shape; add to slow cooker. Spread with ⅓ cup ketchup. Continue with recipe.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 4 hrs.
Calories: 250 **Protein:** 29g **Fat:** 5g (2g sat.) **Chol.:** 130mg **Carbs.:** 19g **Sodium:** 1,070mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 10g

NO MORE DRY MEATLOAF

Sure, lean beef and turkey are better for you, but they tend to make a dry meatloaf. The save: Add a handful of shredded carrots to the meat mixture before shaping. The moisture-rich vegetable will release water as it cooks, basting the meatloaf from the inside out for moist and tender texture.

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Pulled Pork Sandwiches

Smoked paprika and brown sugar barbecue sauce give these meaty sandwiches a zesty-sweet kick

- **3 lbs. boneless pork butt**
- **1 (6 oz.) can tomato paste**
- **½ cup barbecue sauce**
- **⅓ cup + 1 Tbs. white vinegar**
- **2 Tbs. packed dark brown sugar**
- **1½ tsp. garlic powder**
- **1½ tsp. smoked paprika**
- **½ tsp. + ⅛ tsp. salt**
- **¼ tsp. pepper**
- **2 Tbs. oil**
- **4 cups packaged coleslaw mix**
- **8 kaiser rolls, split**
- **Cilantro sprigs (optional)**

● Place pork in bottom of 4-qt. slow cooker. In medium bowl, stir together tomato paste, barbecue sauce, ⅓ cup vinegar, brown sugar, garlic powder, smoked paprika, ½ tsp. salt and pepper; spoon over pork. Cover; cook on low until very tender, about 12 hrs.

● In large bowl, whisk oil, remaining 1 Tbs. vinegar and ⅛ tsp. salt. Add coleslaw mix; stir until evenly combined. Transfer pork to cutting board; using 2 forks, shred meat.

● Skim fat from sauce in slow cooker. In large bowl, combine pork and ½ cup sauce; reserve remaining sauce. Fill rolls with slaw and pork. Serve sandwiches with remaining sauce. If desired, garnish with cilantro.

Servings: 8. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 12 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 499 **Protein:** 33g **Fat:** 19g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 98mg **Carbs.:** 47g **Sodium:** 601mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 14g

PAIR IT WITH SWEET POTATO FRIES

Place rimmed baking sheet in oven; heat to 400°F. Peel and cut 3 sweet potatoes into ½"-thick sticks. In large bowl, toss potatoes with 2 Tbs. oil, 1 Tbs. cornstarch and ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper. Carefully transfer potatoes to hot baking sheet and spread out in single layer. Bake until crisp and tender, about 15 min.

Tamale Casserole

Convenient corn muffin mix creates the base while jarred salsa does double duty as the cooking sauce and topping for this layered delight that preps in just 20 minutes

1 lb. boneless chicken breasts
1 (15.5 oz.) jar chunky salsa
1 (8.5 oz.) pkg. corn muffin mix
½ cup milk
1 egg
3 cups spinach, coarsely chopped
4 oz. Monterey Jack cheese, shredded, 1 cup
Fresh cilantro leaves (optional)

● Place chicken and half of salsa in bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker. Cover; cook on high until chicken is tender, 2–3 hrs. Transfer chicken to cutting board. Let cool slightly. Using 2 forks, shred chicken.

● Heat oven to 400°F. Coat 2-qt. baking dish with cooking spray. In medium bowl, using spoon or rubber spatula, stir together muffin mix, milk and egg until blended, but not smooth. Spread in baking dish. Bake until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean, 12–14 min.

● Spread remaining salsa over cornbread in baking dish. Top with spinach, then chicken mixture. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake until spinach is wilted, chicken is heated through and cheese is melted, 5 min. Heat broiler. Broil until cheese is golden brown, 2–3 min. If desired, serve sprinkled with cilantro leaves.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min.
Total time: 2 hrs., 35 min.
Calories: 340 **Protein:** 28g **Fat:** 11g (4g sat.) **Chol.:** 105mg **Carbs.:** 35g **Sodium:** 1,050mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 7g

PAIR IT WITH ZINGY GUACAMOLE

In large bowl, using fork, coarsely mash 2 avocados (pitted, peeled). Stir in 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice, 2 tsp. green Tabasco sauce, 1 tsp. garlic powder, ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper until blended. Stir in 1 tomato (seeded, chopped) and ¼ cup chopped cilantro.

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PAIR IT WITH LEMONY BROCCOLI AND PEPPER SAUTÉ

In skillet over medium-high heat, cook 3 cups broccoli florets, 1 red and/or yellow pepper and 1 minced shallot in 2 Tbs. olive oil, 3 min. Add ¼ cup apple cider and 1 Tbs. lemon juice. Cook, stirring, until cider evaporates, 2 min. Sprinkle with ¼ tsp. salt.

Butternut Squash Risotto

Our twist on an Italian favorite is just as creamy as the classic but without all the constant stirring

1 lb. butternut squash cubes
2 Tbs. olive oil
½ tsp. salt
6 cups low-sodium chicken stock
3 Tbs. butter
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups arborio rice
½ cup dry white wine
½ cup finely grated Parmesan
¼ tsp. pepper
2 Tbs. chopped parsley
Olive oil (optional)

- Heat oven to 400°F. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Add squash, oil and ¼ tsp. salt; toss until coated. Spread out in single layer. Bake, stirring once, until squash is tender, 15–20 min. Reserve ¼ squash cubes. Using fork or potato masher, mash remaining squash.

- In pot, bring 5½ cups stock to boil over high heat. Remove from heat; cover. In medium pot, melt butter over medium heat; add onion. Cook, stirring, until starting to soften, 5 min. Stir in garlic and rice. Cook, stirring, 1 min. Add wine; cook, stirring, until liquid has evaporated. Transfer to 6-qt. slow cooker. Stir in hot stock. Cover; cook on high until rice is tender, 1½–2 hrs. Stir in remaining stock, mashed squash, Parmesan, remaining salt and pepper. Top with reserved squash cubes and parsley.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 10 min.
Calories: 270 **Protein:** 7g **Fat:** 14g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 25mg **Carbs.:** 29g **Sodium:** 750mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 5g

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Chili-Stuffed Potatoes

A touch of cinnamon in the sauce is the secret ingredient that makes these spuds even more delicious

1½ lbs. lean ground beef
1 onion, finely chopped
1 (15 oz.) can tomato sauce
2 Tbs. tomato paste
2 tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
6 baking potatoes
Sour cream, diced tomato and diced cucumber (optional)

- Coat 4-qt. slow cooker and 12" nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat skillet over high heat. Add beef and onion; cook, stirring and breaking up meat with spoon, until beef is browned, about 10 min. Drain. Transfer meat mixture to slow cooker. Stir in tomato sauce, tomato paste, chili powder, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Cover; cook on low 3–4 hrs.

- Pierce potatoes in several places. In batches, microwave according to manufacturer's directions for baked potatoes. Split potatoes. Using fork, fluff inside of potatoes. Spoon on chili. If desired, top with sour cream, tomato and cucumber.

EASY VARIATION

Make 'em Vegetarian Chili-Stuffed Potatoes: Sub in 1 cup cooked lentils and 1 cup cooked red beans for beef; add to slow cooker with tomato sauce, paste, chili powder, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Cook on low 2 hrs. Continue with recipe.

Servings: 6. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 300 **Protein:** 28g **Fat:** 8g (3g sat.) **Chol.:** 75mg **Carbs.:** 32g **Sodium:** 600mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 4g

Risotto with Asparagus and Peas

This easy-prep side would also make a satisfying lunch

6	**cups low-sodium chicken broth**
4	**Tbs. butter**
1½	**cups arborio rice**
2	**cloves garlic, minced**
¼	**tsp. + ⅛ tsp. salt**
8	**oz. asparagus, trimmed**
½	**cup frozen peas, thawed, drained**
⅓	**cup grated Parmesan cheese**
¼	**tsp. pepper**
	Parmesan shavings (optional)

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In large pot, bring 5½ cups broth to a boil over high heat. Remove from heat; cover. Reserve.

● In 12" nonstick skillet, melt 2 Tbs. butter over medium-low heat. Add rice; cook, stirring occasionally, until edges are translucent, about 5 min., adding garlic during last 1 min. of cooking time. Transfer to slow cooker; stir in reserved chicken broth and ¼ tsp. salt. Cover; cook on high until rice is tender, about 1½ hrs.

● Meanwhile, cut asparagus into 2" pieces. In large nonstick skillet, melt remaining 2 Tbs. butter over medium-low heat. Add asparagus and remaining salt; cook, stirring, until crisp-tender, 7–8 min. Add peas; cook, stirring, until heated through, about 3 min.

● In medium pot, cook remaining ½ cup broth over medium heat until hot; stir in grated Parmesan and pepper. Stir into slow cooker along with vegetable mixture. Transfer to bowls. If desired, garnish with Parmesan shavings.

Servings: 4. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 2 hrs.
Calories: 290 **Protein:** 9g **Fat:** 10g (6g sat.) **Chol.:** 30mg **Carbs.:** 41g **Sodium:** 410mg **Fiber:** 2g **Sugar:** 3g

Creamed Baby Spinach

Parmesan and cream cheese add richness to this classic dish that is sure to have everyone asking for seconds

2	**Tbs. butter**
1	**bunch leeks, 1 lb., 11 oz.**
¾	**cup half-and-half**
4	**oz. cream cheese**
½	**tsp. salt**
½	**tsp. pepper**
1	**(16 oz.) package baby spinach, roughly chopped**
3	**Tbs. all-purpose flour**
½	**cup grated Parmesan cheese**
	Pinch of grated nutmeg

● Set 4-qt. slow cooker to high; add butter. Meanwhile, trim and discard dark green parts from leeks; finely chop white and light green parts. Rinse and pat dry. Stir leeks

(about 2 cups) into slow cooker. Add half-and-half, cream cheese, ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper; stir until combined. Cover and cook until tender, about 2 hrs.

● Add spinach and flour to slow cooker; stir until evenly combined. Cover; cook until spinach is wilted and sauce is thickened, about 45 min. Stir in Parmesan, remaining ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper and nutmeg until creamy. Transfer to serving bowl. Serve immediately.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Creamy Spinach Soup: In blender, in batches, puree creamed spinach with an equal amount of vegetable or chicken broth, reheating as needed. If desired, serve soup topped with croutons.

Servings: 6. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 3 hrs.
Calories: 280 **Protein:** 8g **Fat:** 16g (10g sat.) **Chol.:** 50mg **Carbs.:** 28g **Sodium:** 520mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 8g

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Creamed Corn

We stirred a pinch of cayenne pepper into this warming dish, but you can sub in paprika if you prefer less heat

- **2 Tbs. butter**
- **2 small shallots**
- **1 (16 oz.) bag frozen corn, thawed, drained**
- **4 oz. cream cheese**
- **¼ cup heavy cream**
- **2 tsp. sugar**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **⅛ tsp. pepper**
- **Pinch cayenne pepper**
- **2 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley**

● Set 4-qt. slow cooker to high and add butter. Meanwhile, halve, peel and finely chop shallots.

● Stir shallots into butter in slow cooker. Add corn, cream cheese, heavy cream, sugar, salt and pepper; stir until evenly combined. Cover; cook on high until thickened, 2 hrs. Sprinkle with cayenne. Transfer to serving bowl. Sprinkle with parsley.

EASY VARIATIONS

Make it Creamy Corn 'n' Crab: Stir 8 oz. lump crab meat into slow cooker with butter. Continue with recipe as directed. Sub in Old Bay seasoning for cayenne pepper.

Make it Cheddar Creamed Corn: Sub in 2 oz. cheddar for half of cream cheese. Continue with recipe. Omit parsley. Top cooked creamed corn with toasted panko.

Servings: 12. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 15 min.
Calories: 110 **Protein:** 2g **Fat:** 7g (5g sat.) **Chol.:** 20mg **Carbs.:** 11g **Sodium:** 95mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 5g

Adobe Stock

Sweet Treats

Think your slow cooker is only good for stews and other savory dishes? Think again! It's the easy secret to the creamiest cheesecake ever, decadent fudgy mug cakes, fruity cobblers and even crème brûlée. Our simple step-by-step instructions make it absolutely foolproof to serve up your most fabulous finale ever

Creamy Vanilla Cheesecake

Graham crackers and butter form the crisp crust on this delight that's perfect topped with fruit

- **¾ cup graham cracker crumbs**
- **1 Tbs. + ½ cup sugar**
- **3 Tbs. butter, melted**
- **2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, at room temp.**
- **2 eggs**
- **⅓ cup sour cream**
- **2 Tbs. all-purpose flour**
- **½ tsp. vanilla extract**
- **Whipped cream, berries and blueberries (optional)**

● Heat oven to 350°F. Wrap outside (including bottom) of 6"x3" springform pan with double layer of foil. Coat pan with cooking spray. Tear long sheet foil. Shape into 4" ring; place in bottom of 4-qt. slow cooker. Fill slow cooker with 1" of water.

● In bowl, combine cracker crumbs and 1 Tbs. sugar; stir in butter. Press in bottom and halfway up side of pan. Bake until set, 8–10 min.

● On medium speed, beat cream cheese and remaining ½ cup sugar until smooth. On low, beat in eggs, then sour cream, flour and vanilla until blended; on medium, beat 1 min. Pour into pan. Place in slow cooker on foil ring. Place 3 layers paper towels under lid. Cover slow cooker. Cook on high until almost set, 2 hrs. Turn off slow cooker. Leave cake in slow cooker, covered, 1 hour. Carefully remove pan from slow cooker. Cool on rack. Cover; chill 8 hrs. or overnight. If desired, garnish with whipped cream and berries.

Servings: 6. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 14 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 480 **Protein:** 6g **Fat:** 35g (21g sat.) **Chol.:** 165mg **Carbs.:** 31g **Sodium:** 370mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 22g

Chocolate Mug Cakes

Serve these decadent individual goodies slightly warm or cover and chill—just before topping—for up to 2 days

- **1⅓ cups all-purpose flour**
- **⅔ cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **⅔ cup + 2 Tbs. sugar**
- **1 tsp. baking powder**
- **½ tsp. salt**
- **4 eggs**
- **1 cup milk**
- **½ cup oil**
- **1 tsp. strawberry extract**
- **1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- **Boiling water**
- **1 cup heavy cream**
- **Sprinkles and berries (optional)**

● Coat 6 (8 oz.) heatproof mugs with cooking spray. In bowl, mix flour, cocoa powder, ⅔ cup sugar, baking powder and salt. In separate bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, oil and extracts. Stir in flour mixture until combined. Divide evenly among mugs. Fill 6-qt. slow cooker with 1" boiling water.

● Place mugs in slow cooker. Cover; cook on high until slightly wet in center, about 1 hr. Carefully remove mugs from slow cooker. Let cool slightly.

● On medium-high speed, whip cream and remaining sugar until soft peaks form. Top mug cakes with whipped cream. If desired, garnish with berries and sprinkles.

Servings: 6. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 2 hrs.
Calories: 560 **Protein:** 11g **Fat:** 39g (15g sat.) **Chol.:** 13mg **Carbs.:** 49g **Sodium:** 280mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 23g

EASY SECRET TO CRUMB CRUSTS

For an ideal texture, it's key to pack crumbs tightly, and a straight-sided measuring cup is the perfect tool for the job! To do: Spread crumbs in pan, then press them with the cup—its shape lets you pack the mixture right up to the edge of the pan, plus it makes it easy to press crumbs up the pan side.

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TRICK TO KEEP BROWN SUGAR SOFT

Molasses in brown sugar gives the sweetener its rich caramel-like flavor, but it tends to cause the sugar to quickly turn rock hard. To prevent this, tuck a few marshmallows into the bag before storing. The gelatin in marshmallows locks in moisture, keeping the sugar recipe-ready.

Domino
DARK BROWN SUGAR

Walnut-Raisin Baked Apples

These spiced-just-right delights are even better with a scoop of ice cream

- **6 apples, such as Gala or Fuji**
- **¾ cup chopped walnuts**
- **½ cup golden raisins, chopped**
- **2 Tbs. butter, at room temp.**
- **2 Tbs. packed brown sugar**
- **½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **½ tsp. grated orange zest**
- **Pinch of ground cloves**
- **Cinnamon sticks and warm honey (optional)**

● Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Using apple corer, remove and discard cores from apples. In dry skillet over medium heat, cook walnuts, stirring often, until lightly toasted, about 5 min. Transfer to small bowl; let cool.

● In separate bowl, combine raisins, butter, brown sugar, ground cinnamon, zest and ground cloves. Stir in walnuts. Fill center of apples with filling. Transfer to slow cooker.

● Place 3 layers of paper towels under lid. Cover slow cooker with lid. Cook on high until apples are tender, 2–2½ hrs. Let cool slightly. Transfer to serving bowls. If desired, garnish with cinnamon sticks and drizzle with warm honey.

EASY VARIATION

Make 'em Tropical Baked Apples: Sub in ½ cup chopped cashews and ¼ cup sweetened flaked coconut for walnuts and ½ cup diced dried tropical fruit (such as pineapple, mango and papaya) for raisins. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 6. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 45 min.
Calories: 270 **Protein:** 3g **Fat:** 13g (4g sat.) **Chol.:** 10mg **Carbs.:** 39g **Sodium:** 35mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 30g

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Caramel-Kissed Spice Cake

We jazzed up convenient cake mix with apple sauce and walnuts for this extra-moist, flavor-packed treat

- **1 (15.25 oz.) pkg. spice cake mix**
- **3 eggs**
- **1 cup apple juice**
- **½ cup unsweetened apple sauce**
- **½ cup finely chopped walnuts**
- **3 oz. cream cheese, at room temp.**
- **⅓ cup confectioners' sugar**
- **¾ cup heavy cream**
- **½ tsp. vanilla extract**
- **1 cup salted caramel topping, from 11.5-oz. jar**

● Line 6-qt. slow cooker with slow cooker liner. On low speed, beat cake mix, eggs, apple juice and apple sauce, 30 sec.; on medium, beat 2 min. Stir in walnuts. Transfer to slow cooker. Cover; cook on low 2 hrs. or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Using liner, lift cake from slow cooker; transfer to rack. Let cool.

● In medium bowl, on medium speed, beat cream cheese and confectioners' sugar until smooth. Add heavy cream and vanilla extract; beat just until soft peaks form.

● Place cake on serving plate. In microwave-safe bowl, microwave caramel sauce in 10-sec. intervals, stirring, until warm. Pour over cake; let cool. Top cake with cream cheese whipped cream.

Servings: 12. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 3 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 390 **Protein:** 5g **Fat:** 17g (9g sat.) **Chol.:** 75mg **Carbs.:** 57g **Sodium:** 420mg **Fiber:** 1g **Sugar:** 38g

Brown Sugar White Chocolate Fudge

It's a cinch to transform kitchen staples into melt-in-your-mouth treats that are pretty enough for gifting

- **1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk**
- **1 cup packed dark brown sugar**
- **½ cup butter, cut into 8 pieces**
- **¼ cup maple syrup**
- **2 Tbs. light corn syrup**
- **1 cup white chocolate chips**
- **1 tsp. vanilla extract**

● Line 8" square baking pan with enough foil to overhang sides by 2". Coat baking pan and 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In slow cooker, combine condensed milk, brown sugar, butter, maple syrup and corn syrup. Cover; cook on 1 hr., 30 min., stirring halfway. Turn off slow cooker. Stir in white chocolate chips and vanilla extract. Cover; let stand until melted, 30 min. Stir until smooth. Transfer to baking pan. Let cool. Cover; chill until firm, at least 3 hrs.

● Using foil, lift fudge from pan. Remove foil. Cut into 36 squares. Store in airtight container in refrigerator until ready to serve.

EASY VARIATIONS

Make 'em Mocha Bites: Sub in dark chocolate chips for white and 1 tsp. coffee extract for vanilla. Continue with recipe as directed.

Make it Brown Sugar Nut Fudge: Stir in ¾ cup toasted chopped walnuts or almonds before transferring fudge mixture to pan.

Servings: 36. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 20 min.
Calories: 110 **Protein:** 2g **Fat:** 5g (2g sat.) **Chol.:** 5mg **Carbs.:** 17g **Sodium:** 25mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 16g

Coconut Rice Pudding

This old-fashioned comfort classic gets a tropical flavor makeover

- **5 cups 2% reduced-fat milk**
- **1 cup uncooked rice**
- **1 cup sugar**
- **3 Tbs. butter, sliced**
- **3 cinnamon sticks**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **1 tsp. coconut extract**
- **Toasted coconut and strawberries (optional)**

● Coat 6-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. In slow cooker, combine 4 cups milk, 1 cup water, rice, sugar, butter, cinnamon sticks and salt. Cover; cook on low until rice is tender, about 4 hrs.

● Stir rice; turn off slow cooker. Cover; let stand 30 min. Remove and discard cinnamon sticks. Stir in remaining 1 cup milk and coconut extract. Transfer to large bowl; cool. Divide among 8 (8 oz.) glasses. Cover; chill. If desired, top with toasted coconut and strawberries.

EASY VARIATIONS

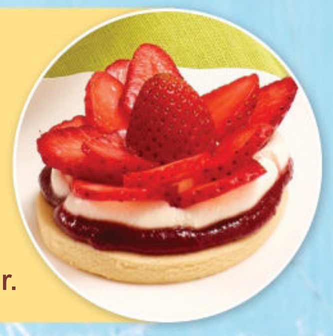
Make it Cocoa-Almond Rice Pudding: Sub in 1 tsp. almond extract for coconut extract. Stir 1 cup finely chopped dark chocolate into cooled pudding. Dollop with whipped cream and garnish with toasted sliced almonds.

Make it Vanilla-Blueberry Rice Pudding: Sub in vanilla extract for the coconut extract. Omit the coconut flakes. Sub in blueberries for the strawberries.

Servings: 8. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 45 min.
Calories: 310 **Protein:** 7g **Fat:** 7g (5g sat.) **Chol.:** 25mg **Carbs.:** 52g **Sodium:** 150mg **Fiber:** 0g **Sugar:** 33g

DRESS IT UP WITH A PRETTY BERRY 'FLOWER'

Add extra pizzazz to our rice pudding and other desserts with this so-easy garnish: Simply arrange thin strawberry slices to resemble flower petals, then set a small whole strawberry in the center.



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Food & Photo

Coffee Crème Brûlée

Guests will be delighted to crack into the sugary shell on this java-infused twist on a creamy classic

- **1½ cups heavy cream**
- **¼ cup + 1 Tbs. sugar**
- **2 tsp. instant espresso powder**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **3 egg yolks**
- **Boiling water**

- In pot, whisk heavy cream, ¾ cup sugar, espresso and salt; over medium heat, cook, stirring, until simmering, 1–2 min. In bowl, whisk egg yolks until smooth. Gradually drizzle espresso mixture into eggs, whisking constantly; strain. Divide mixture between 4 (4 oz.) ramekins.

- Line bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker ceramic bowl with folded tea towel; place ramekins on top. Pour enough boiling water alongside ramekins until halfway up the sides (2–3 cups). Lay double layer of paper towels under lid; cover slow cooker. Cook on high until custards slightly jiggle in center, 1 hr., 30 min.

- Carefully transfer ramekins to plate; chill until cold and firm, 2 hrs. Sprinkle each custard with ¾ tsp. sugar, rotating to coat tops. Broil on high until sugar is golden brown, 5–6 min.

EASY VARIATION

Make it Chocolate Crème Brûlée: Swap in 3 oz. bittersweet chocolate (chopped) for instant espresso powder; melt chocolate in pot with heavy cream, sugar and salt. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 4. Active time: 15 min.
Total time: 3 hrs., 45 min.
Calories: 410 **Protein:** 5g **Fat:** 36g (22g sat.)
Chol.: 240mg **Carbs.:** 19g **Sodium:** 180mg
Fiber: 0g **Sugar:** 18g

TRICK TO SEPARATING EGGS

If the thought of separating eggs gives you second thoughts about trying that recipe, use this tip: Crack each egg into a bowl and gently pour them one by one into a small funnel set over another bowl. The egg white will fall right through while the yolk stays in the funnel.

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Berry Apple Cobbler

Our cinnamon-walnut topping adds buttery richness to a tangy fruit filling in this simple yet elegant cobbler

- **4 Honeycrisp apples, peeled, cored, thinly sliced**
- **1 (14 oz.) pkg. frozen sliced strawberries, about 3 cups**
- **2 cups frozen raspberries**
- **¾ cup sugar**
- **1 Tbs. lemon juice**
- **2 Tbs. minute tapioca**
- **½ cup all-purpose flour**
- **¼ cup packed dark brown sugar**
- **½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **½ cup butter, melted, cooled**
- **½ cup chopped walnuts**

● Add apples, strawberries, raspberries, ½ cup sugar and lemon juice to bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker; toss to combine. Cover; cook on low until apples are tender, 2 hrs., stirring every 30 min. In small bowl, combine remaining ¼ cup sugar with tapioca; sprinkle over fruit. Stir to combine. Cover; cook 15 min. Carefully pour mixture into 9" pie pan; reserve.

● Heat oven to 400°F. In small bowl, using fingers, combine flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and butter until crumb-like consistency forms. Add walnuts; toss to combine. Sprinkle mixture evenly over fruit. Bake until topping is browned and crisp, 16–18 min. Transfer to rack; let cool 30 min. before serving.

Servings: 10. Active time: 25 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 25 min.
Calories: 280 **Protein:** 5g **Fat:** 11g (1g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 46g **Sodium:** 30mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 31g

PRO TIP TO CRISP COBBLER TOPS

Frozen berries help fruity desserts become a year-round treat. The only hitch? The extra juices can end up making the topping soggy. To prevent this, par-bake the topping for 10–15 min. while the fruit mixture cooks, then combine the two and bake until browned and bubbly for crispy perfection.

Poached Pears

This elegant dessert gets ultimate flavor from orange and star anise

- **4 Bosc pears**
- **1 orange**
- **1 (750 ml.) btle. dry red wine**
- **¼ cup sugar**
- **3 star anise pods**

● Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Peel pears, leaving stem intact. Cut orange into quarters. In slow cooker, combine wine, 3 cups water, sugar, star anise and orange quarters.

● Place pears sideways in slow cooker. Cook on low until tender, 4 hrs. Remove pears from slow

Molten Lava Cakes

Smiles are guaranteed when guests bite into the ooey-gooey centers of these decadent fudgy delights

- **½ cup butter**
- **1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips**
- **3 eggs**
- **¼ cup granulated sugar**
- **2 Tbs. all-purpose flour**
- **¼ tsp. salt**
- **5 dark chocolate truffles**
- **Fudge sauce, warmed**
- **Raspberries**
- **Fresh mint**
- **Confectioners' sugar**

● Coat 5 (4 oz.) ramekins with baking spray with flour; reserve. In pot, melt butter over low heat; remove from heat. Add chocolate; let stand 2–3 min. Stir until smooth. On medium speed, beat eggs and granulated sugar until frothy, 1–2 min. Add chocolate mixture, flour and salt; stir until combined. Divide evenly among ramekins. Gently press 1 chocolate truffle into the center of each cake.

● Line bottom of 6-qt. slow cooker with folded tea towel; place ramekins on top. Pour enough boiling water to reach halfway up sides of ramekins, about 2–3 cups. Place 3 layers of paper towels under lid. Cover slow cooker. Cook on high until cakes are set and spring back to the touch, 1 hr., 45 min. Transfer to rack; cool 5 min.

● Run knife around edges of cakes; invert onto serving plates, tapping lightly on bottoms to release. Serve warm with fudge sauce, raspberries, mint and confectioners' sugar.

Servings: 5. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 2 hrs., 5 min.
Calories: 540 **Protein:** 8g **Fat:** 42g (26g sat.) **Chol.:** 160mg **Carbs.:** 44g **Sodium:** 160mg **Fiber:** 4g **Sugar:** 31g

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cooker; remove and discard orange pieces and star anise.

- In pot, bring 1 cup liquid from slow cooker to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook until mixture is reduced to ½ cup, about 10 min. Transfer to heat-proof bowl; let cool. Drizzle over pears.

EASY VARIATION

Make 'em Poached Apples: Sub in 4 Gala apples for the pears, 1 lemon for the orange, 1 (750 ml.) btle. dry white wine (such as Pinot Grigio) for the red wine and 3 cinnamon sticks for the star anise pods. Continue with recipe as directed.

Servings: 4. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 4 hrs., 30 min.
Calories: 340 **Protein:** 1g **Fat:** 0g (0g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 50g **Sodium:** 10mg **Fiber:** 6g **Sugar:** 35g

Berry Pear Compote

All it takes is a handful of ingredients to create this fruity delight—try it over waffles for an even sweeter treat

2 pears
3 cups fresh blueberries
¼ cup sugar
2 Tbs. lemon juice
1 cup fresh raspberries
Vanilla ice cream

- Coat 4-qt. slow cooker with cooking spray. Peel, core and dice pears. Transfer pears, blueberries, sugar and lemon juice to bottom of slow cooker; stir to combine. Cover; cook on high until pears are tender and blueberries have released their juices, 1–1½ hrs.

- Stir in raspberries. Cover; cook 5 min. Serve warm with ice cream.

EASY VARIATIONS

Make it Apple-Berry Compote: Sub in 2 apples for pears and 3 cups cranberries for blueberries. Increase sugar to ¾ cup. Continue with recipe as directed.

Make it Spiced Pear Compote: Make recipe as directed, adding ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon and ⅛ tsp. ground nutmeg to slow cooker with pears and berries. Top with butter pecan ice cream.

Make it Berry-Pear Parfait: Dividing evenly, layer cooked compote with 2 cups vanilla yogurt in 4 parfait glasses. Top with dried fruit 'n' nut granola.

Servings: 8. Active time: 10 min. Total time: 1 hr., 50 min.
Calories: 90 **Protein:** 1g **Fat:** 0g (0g sat.) **Chol.:** 0mg **Carbs.:** 24g **Sodium:** 0mg **Fiber:** 3g **Sugar:** 16g

Fix 'n' freeze slow-

Easy-prep anytime dinners!

German Pork Stew

White wine adds richness to this comforting supper—sub in more broth if you prefer

- **1½ cups chicken broth**
- **⅓ cup white wine**
- **⅓ cup all-purpose flour**
- **1½ lbs. boneless rib end pork roast, cut into 1¼" pieces**
- **1 tsp. dried sage**
- **2 parsnips, peeled, sliced**
- **2 carrots, sliced**
- **2 ribs celery, sliced**
- **1 onion, chopped**
- **4 cups chopped collard greens**
- **2 Tbs. Dijon mustard**

● In medium bowl, whisk together broth, wine and flour. Season pork with sage, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. In large zip-top freezer bag, layer parsnips, carrots, celery, onion, pork and broth mixture. Seal and freeze flat. (Or if making for tonight's dinner, layer parsnips, carrots, celery, onion and pork in 4-qt. slow cooker; top with broth mixture. Cook as directed below.)

● Thaw freezer bag in fridge overnight before desired cooking date. Transfer contents to slow cooker. Cover and cook on low 5 hrs., until pork is tender. Add in collard greens; stir until combined. Cover; cook on low 1 hr. Stir in mustard.

Tip: For best results, when cooking with white wine, use a crisp, dry variety, such as sauvignon blanc.

Servings: 6. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 6 hrs., 30 min. + overnight

cooker sensations

Saucy Barbecue Drumsticks

Your favorite store-bought BBQ sauce is the quickie secret to this hearty dinner

8 chicken drumsticks, about 2½ lbs.
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 small red onion, chopped
1 red pepper, seeded, cut into ¼"-thick rings
2 cloves garlic, minced
1½ cups bottled barbecue sauce

- Rub chicken with garlic powder, cumin and ½ tsp. salt. In large zip-top freezer bag, layer onion, peppers, garlic, chicken and 1 cup sauce. Seal and freeze flat. Cover and chill remaining ½ cup sauce. (Or, if making for tonight's dinner, layer onion, red peppers, garlic and chicken in 6-qt. slow cooker. Top with 1 cup sauce. Cook as directed.)

- Thaw freezer bag in fridge overnight before desired cooking date. Transfer contents to 6-qt. slow cooker. Cook on low 3½ hrs., until chicken is cooked through.

- Line rimmed baking sheet with foil; coat with cooking spray. Transfer drumsticks, meaty side up, to baking sheet; brush with reserved ½ cup barbecue sauce. Broil until golden, 3–4 min. Serve with red pepper and onion mixture.

Servings: 4. Active time: 30 min. Total time: 4 hrs. + overnight

Lines + Angles (2)

Thai Peanut Chicken Stew

Peanut sauce and coconut milk combine to create the base for this zingy pot of mmm

- **1 cup bottled peanut sauce**
- **½ cup coconut milk**
- **1 Tbs. packed brown sugar**
- **2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs**
- **1 lb. (4 cups) small potatoes, quartered**
- **2 cups sliced carrots**
- **1 cup pearl onions**
- **2 garlic cloves, minced**

● In bowl, whisk peanut sauce, coconut milk and sugar. Cut chicken thighs into halves or thirds, depending on size. Sprinkle with ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. In large zip-top freezer bag, layer potatoes, carrots, onions, chicken, garlic and peanut sauce mixture. Seal and freeze flat. (Or if making for tonight's dinner, transfer all ingredients to 6-qt. slow cooker. Cook as directed below.)

● Thaw freezer bag in fridge overnight before desired cooking date. Transfer contents to slow cooker. Cover and cook on low 8 hrs. If desired, garnish with sliced basil leaves just before serving.

Servings: 6. Active time: 15 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 15 min. + overnight

Lines + Angles; Shutterstock (2);
Food & Photo (4)

5 SECRETS TO FREEZER-MEAL SUCCESS

What's better than coming home to dinner that's done? These recipes make it easy—each can be prepped earlier in the day and slow-cooked for a no-stress supper. Or save even more time by prepping all four at once, then freezing and saving for future meals. If you plan on freezing, follow these tips for best results.

1 LABEL EACH BAG

Meals can look similar once frozen, so write the recipe name, date and cooking instructions on each bag.

2 BROWN MEAT FIRST

Searing meat before freezing creates a crust, adding depth of flavor that makes the dish shine.

Spanish Beef & Chorizo

We added orange segments for a subtle sweet note that complements smoky sausage

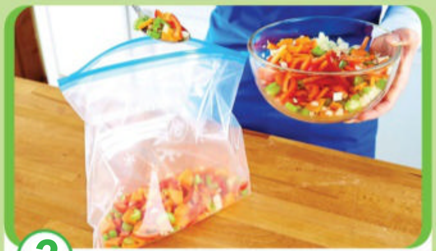
1	**lb. beef stew meat**
1	**Tbs. olive oil**
1	**small onion, diced**
2	**cloves garlic, minced**
1	**Tbs. smoked paprika**
½	**lb. dried chorizo, sliced**
1	**(28 oz.) can crushed tomatoes**
½	**cup beef broth**
1	**(15.5 oz.) can black beans, rinsed, drained**
1	**orange, peeled, segmented**

● Sprinkle beef with ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. In pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add beef; cook, flipping, until browned on all sides, 6–8 min. Transfer to plate; let cool.

● In large zip-top freezer bag, layer onion, garlic, paprika, beef, chorizo, tomatoes and broth. Seal and freeze flat. (Or if making for tonight's dinner, place onion, garlic, paprika, beef, and chorizo in 6-qt. slow cooker; top with tomatoes and broth. Cook as directed below.)

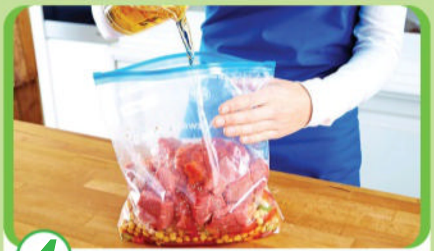
● Thaw freezer bag in fridge overnight before desired cooking date. Transfer contents to slow cooker. Cover and cook on low 8 hrs., adding beans during last 15 min. of cooking time. Stir in orange. If desired, garnish with cilantro.

Servings: 6. Active time: 20 min. Total time: 8 hrs., 20 min. + overnight



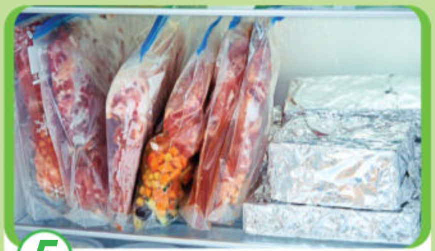
3 LAYER BAGS *THIS* WAY

First veggies, then meat. When poured into cooker, the slower-cooking meat is nearest the heat.



4 TOP OFF WITH LIQUID

Pouring liquids last will prevent any overflow. Then, squeeze air from bag, seal and set flat in freezer.

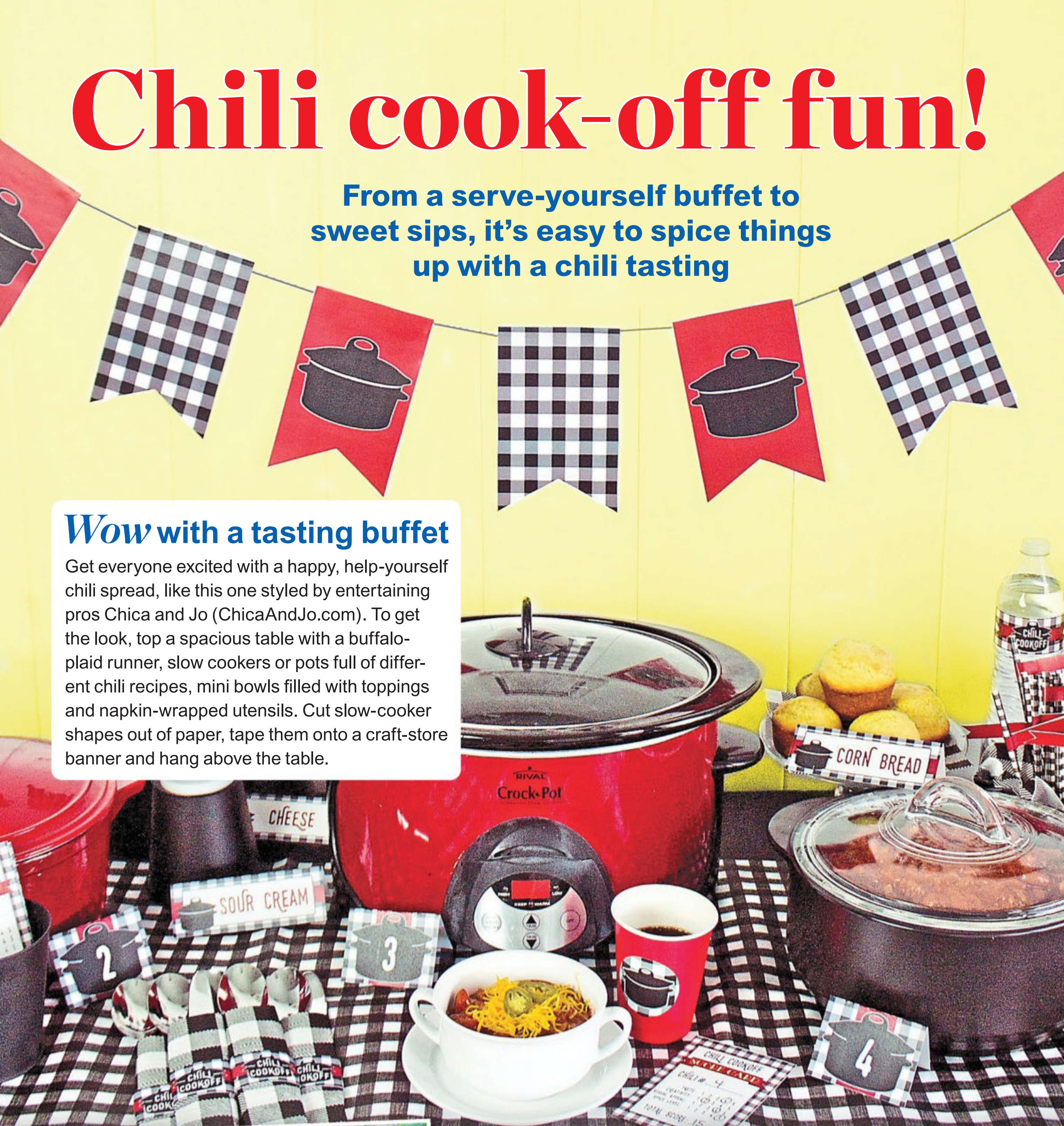


5 ARRANGE UPRIGHT

Once frozen solid, arrange bags upright to make the most of freezer space. Use within 3 months.

Chili cook-off fun!

From a serve-yourself buffet to sweet sips, it's easy to spice things up with a chili tasting


CHEESE
SOUR CREAM
CORN BREAD
RIVAL
Crock-Pot
2
3
4
CHILI COOKOFF
CHILI COOKOFF SCORE CARD
CHILI # 4
TOTAL SCORE 15

Wow with a tasting buffet

Get everyone excited with a happy, help-yourself chili spread, like this one styled by entertaining pros Chica and Jo (ChicaAndJo.com). To get the look, top a spacious table with a buffalo-plaid runner, slow cookers or pots full of different chili recipes, mini bowls filled with toppings and napkin-wrapped utensils. Cut slow-cooker shapes out of paper, tape them onto a craft-store banner and hang above the table.

Serve up toppings!

Guests will love dressing up their chili with tasty add-ins, thanks to a toppings bar! Simply prep items before guests arrive and add to mini bowls. Some ideas: shredded cheeses, guacamole, sour cream, diced tomatoes, onions and more!

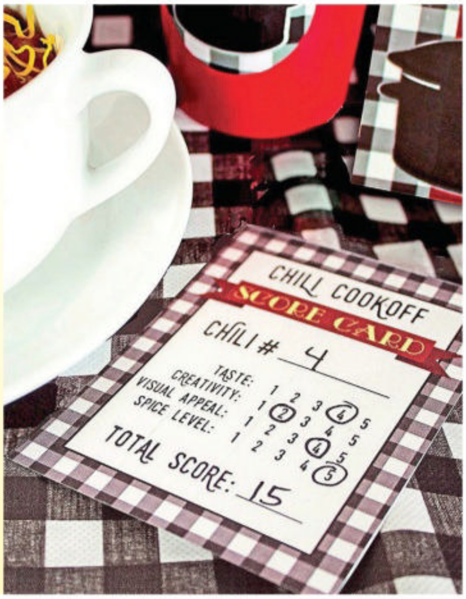
For more easy tips and tricks: Visit Chica and Jo's site ChicaAndJo.com or follow them on Instagram @chicaandjo

Inspire smiles with corn bread

At their chili night, Chica and Jo served up fresh-baked corn bread muffins, which are ideal for soaking up leftover chili bits in your bowl. Plus, it's nice to offer variety! "Serve up extra bites to cleanse the palate and keep everyone's interest, like corn bread or corn muffins," says Chica. For a batch of muffins with a moist texture, stir corn bread mix according to box instructions and add either 1 Tbs. of sour cream or 1 Tbs. of melted butter to batter. Spoon the mix into greased muffin tins; bake. Let cool and then serve.

Rank favorites with scorecards

As everyone samples each batch of chili, help 'em keep track of favorites with a scorecard. Chica and Jo made this ballot that's available to download and print (search Chili Cook Off Party Printables, $13, in the ChicaAndJo shop on Etsy.com). Pass out ballots and pencils, then have guests rank each chili. Once you tally up totals, gift the winner a cute apron or oven mitt!



Say cheers with fruity sangria

Packed with the naturally sweet and tart flavors of citrus and berries, this simple sangria is a lovely contrast for savory chili. To make: Slice up ½ each of an orange, grapefruit and lime; add to pitcher. Gently mash fruit with the handle of a wooden spoon to release juices. Pour in a bottle of red wine and ½ cup each of brandy and sliced strawberries; chill. Pour into wineglasses; garnish with a mint sprig. Repeat using a bottle of white wine, then guests can help themselves to red *or* white!

3 tips for a no-fuss day!

1 *Bulk up your bowls*

To ensure you have enough chili to feed everyone, plan on making ½ cup to 1 cup per guest. If you worry that a particular recipe might not be enough, bulk it up with a healthy filler, such as fresh mushrooms! Simply stir in a few cups of finely diced mushrooms, like portobello or cremini, midway through cooking time to stretch your recipe and add meaty, hearty flavor without needing extra beef!

2 *Sample smarter*

For the perfect chili tasting, entertaining pros Chica and Jo suggest setting out small 2-oz. plastic cups and spoons for sampling petite portions of each chili. That way, everyone can try as many varieties as possible without getting too full too quickly. Once everyone decides which chili is their top pick, they can go back and scoop out a full-size serving to enjoy.

3 *Use up leftovers*

Leftover chili is even tastier, thanks to the flavor infusion that happens when it refrigerates overnight. Simply reheat and use on top of nachos, hot dogs, omelets or baked potatoes. Or combine leftovers in a casserole: Spread chili in a baking dish and top with crumbled leftover corn muffins and shredded cheese; bake at 375°F until hot.

Adobe Stock (2); Shutterstock. Text: Brieanne Dyas and Lauren Blum

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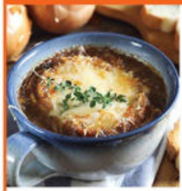
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5 ingredients + 10 minutes' prep =

Dinner made easy!

GINGER TERIYAKI CHICKEN

● In slow cooker, combine 3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs (cubed); 2 (4.2 oz.) pkgs. ginger-teriyaki stir-fry sauce, such as Simply Asia; and 3 Tbs. honey. Cook on low 6–8 hrs. or on high 3–4 hrs., adding 2 Tbs. cornstarch mixed with 2 Tbs. cold water and 1 (12 oz.) bag frozen broccoli florets (thawed) during last 15 min. of cooking. If desired, serve over rice.

CHICKEN 'N' SHRIMP JAMBALAYA

● In slow cooker, combine 1½ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs (cubed); 1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes with garlic and olive oil; and 1 (12 oz.) bag frozen mixed peppers and onions (thawed). Cover; cook on low 6–8 hrs. or on high 3–4 hrs., adding 1 (8 oz.) pkg. jambalaya rice mix, such as Zatarain's, and 1 lb. large shrimp (cleaned) during last 30 min. of cooking.

FRENCH DIP AU JUS

● In slow cooker, combine 3 lbs. sirloin tip London broil; 3 Tbs. grainy mustard; 1 (12 oz.) jar au jus gravy; 1 (1 oz.) envelope beefy onion soup mix, such as Lipton Recipe Secrets; and ½ cup water. Cover; cook on low 6–8 hrs. or on high 3–4 hrs. Remove beef; thinly slice. Add beef back to slow cooker, stirring to coat. Divide beef among 6 rolls. Serve with sauce for dipping.

Food & Photo (6)

Celebrate! with Woman's World

SLOW-COOKER COMFORT

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St. Patrick's Day mmm...

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- ✓ Sinus pain
- ✓ GI upset
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Insomnia

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BREAKTHROUGH RESEARCH: 45% of women are genetically programmed to need MORE carbs to lose weight & feel their best

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Debbie lost 115 lbs when she started eating 5x MORE of her favorite carbs

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How eating more *butter* can help you lose 17 lbs this month!

A Country Store Mystery
Four Leaf Cleaver
KENSINGTON COZIES
MADDIE DAY

Dig Into These Mouthwatering Mysteries With Recipes!

Just in time for St. Patrick's Day, award-winning author Maddie Day cooks up a charming new mystery with tasty Irish recipes to try, including this hearty stew her series star Robbie Jordan serves (when not solving crimes!) at her country store and restaurant…

ABE'S IRISH STEAK AND STOUT STEW

from *Four Leaf Cleaver* by Maddie Day

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds chuck steak
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 5 tablespoons oil, divided
- 1.25 cups beef stock or broth
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 8-oz sliced mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 3-4 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 cup Irish Stout

Directions:

1. Cut the chuck steak into 1-inch pieces removing as much visible fat as possible. In a large bowl, combine the flour, salt, and pepper. Toss the meat with the flour mixture until each piece is thoroughly coated.
2. In a heavy skillet, heat 3 tablespoons of the oil over medium-high heat. Cook the beef until browned on all sides. Work in batches and don't overcrowd the pan. Transfer the beef to a heavy Dutch oven as you work. When all the beef has been browned, drain off and discard any excess oil in the pan. Add 1/4 cup of the beef broth or stock to deglaze the pan. Pour the deglazing liquid into the Dutch oven with the browned beef.
3. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in the same skillet. Add the onion and mushrooms and cook for 6-7 minutes or until light brown. Add to the Dutch oven with the beef.
4. Add the tomato paste, thyme, Stout, and remaining beef broth or stock to the Dutch oven. Heat over medium-high heat until the mixture comes to a boil.
5. Reduce the heat and simmer gently with the lid slightly askew for 1.5 hours. At the end of the cooking time, test the mixture for seasoning and add more salt if needed.

Serve hot with Stout and cheese biscuits.

More Mysteries with Recipes! →

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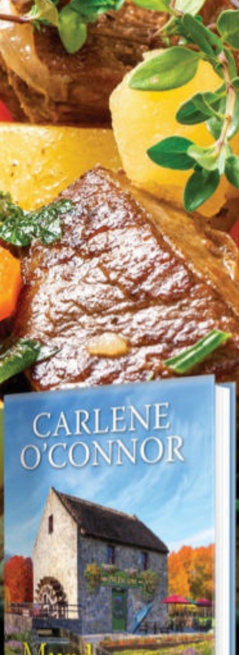
IRISH COFFEE MURDER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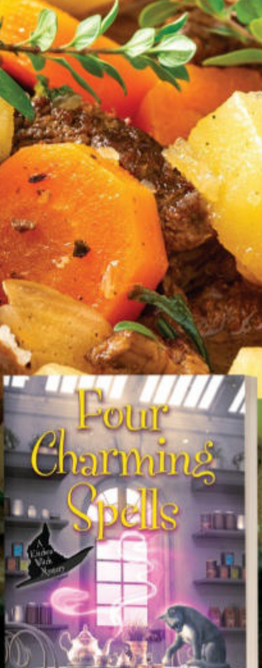
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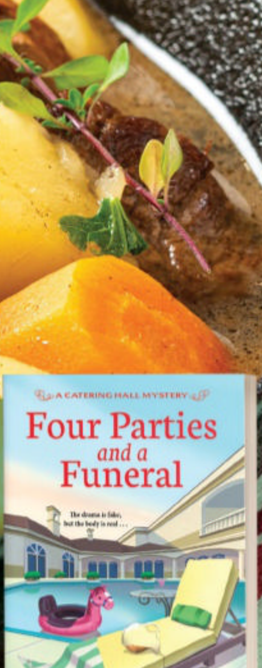
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